CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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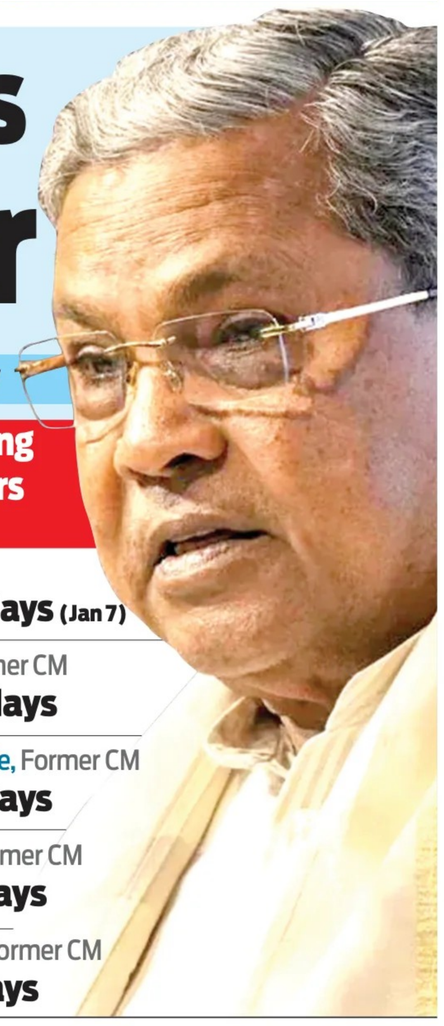
Siddaramaiah set to become Karnataka's longest-serving Chief Minister

CM credited public support for his political success, noting unexpected victories and a remarkable electoral journey



CM to discuss cabinet reshuffle with Cong leaders

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that the state budget preparation will begin after Sankranti and that any decision regarding a cabinet reshuffle will be discussed with senior Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, if they provide time for the meeting. He made these remarks while speaking to the media at Mysuru airport.

MYSURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, becomes the long-standing record of former CM, the late D. Devaraj Urs, said that this achievement has been made possible by the blessings and support of the people. Speaking to the media at Mysuru airport, he said that with the blessings of the people, he would, on Jan 6 (today), equal the record of late Devaraj Urs in terms of the length of service as Chief Minister of the state. He also reflected on his political journey, noting that he never expected to become a minister, let alone a Chief Minister, after starting av s a taluk board member.

₹5 lakh compensation for helium cylinder blast victims

Following the helium gas cylinder explosion near Mysuru Palace on December 25, which killed three people and injured three others, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced ₹5 lakh compensation for each victim's family. The NIA is investigating the incident. Speaking to the media, the CM praised the police for their ongoing investigation and assured further decisions will follow the inquiry report.

Siddaramaiah highlighted that over the course of 13 elections, he has won more than eight times, emphasizing that records are created to be broken. While acknowledging Urs' popularity despite belonging to a small community, he said direct comparisons are difficult as the political landscape during Urs' tenure was very different. Urs had been elected unopposed once, which reflected the unique circumstances of that era.

The CM added that in the future, other leaders may surpass his record, present larger budgets, or achieve new milestones. He clarified that he has not yet made any decision regarding organizing a "Sadhana Samavesha" (achievement gathering) to mark his tenure. Siddaramaiah's remarks underscored that leadership achievements are built over time, supported by public faith, and that records are meant to inspire future leaders rather than define them.

Noting that political records are meant to be broken, he quipped: "Did Virat Kohli not break the records of Sachin Tendulkar?" The Chief Minister said he did not believe that such milestones would remain unmatched. "Other leaders may emerge, they may rule for a longer period than me," he added.

Longest-serving Chief Ministers in K'taka

- Siddaramaiah, CM — **7 years, 240 days** (Jan 7)
- D. Devaraj Urs, Former CM — **7 years, 239 days**
- Ramakrishna Hegde, Former CM — **5 years, 216 days**
- S. Nijalingappa, Former CM — **7 years, 175 days**
- B.S. Yediyurappa, Former CM — **5 years, 82 days**

'Save Kogilu, Remove Illegal Immigrants,' BJP holds protest

BENGALURU

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday staged a protest in Kogilu against the Karnataka government's decision to provide houses to people who lost their dwellings during a recent eviction drive in the area.

The protest, held near the Country Club on Bagalur Main Road under the slogan "Save Kogilu, Remove Illegal Immigrants", was led by BJP state president B.Y. Vijayendra, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R. Ashoka, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, along with several party MLAs and MLCs.

Addressing reporters, Ashoka said the agitation was aimed at protecting Karnataka's land resources, which he asserted should be reserved exclusively for the people of the state. He alleged that the police prevented BJP workers from reaching the protest site, stopping them nearly three kilometres away, and termed the action unfair.

"Congress is betraying the state. Instead of helping our own poor and homeless citizens, the government is turning a blind eye to them while favouring illegal migrants from other states."

—R. Ashoka, BJP leader

Ashoka accused the Congress government, led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, of misusing land for political gains. "Karnataka has limited land, and it belongs to the people of the state, not to any individual leader," he said, adding that Congress leaders should offer their own land if they wished to support housing for the evicted families.

Vijayendra questioned the government's move to provide housing after initially demolishing allegedly illegal structures, calling it a reversal under political pressure. He also alleged that houses were being allotted to illegal migrants and claimed the decision had raised serious public concerns about governance in the state.

He further alleged misuse of public funds, pointing out that nearly 38 lakh poor people had applied for housing but received no allotments in the last two-and-a-half years. The BJP leaders said the party would approach the court if necessary.

Earlier, Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh said only 90 evicted families were eligible for compensatory housing, rejecting claims of a larger allotment.

QUICK READ

Bangladesh bans IPL telecast over controversy

DHAKA: Bangladesh has imposed an indefinite ban on the broadcast and promotion of the Indian Premier League (IPL) following the controversy over fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman's removal from the Kolkata Knight Riders squad ahead of IPL 2026. In an official directive issued on January 5, authorities instructed all broadcasters and advertisers to halt IPL-related content immediately, stating the order would remain until further notice and was taken in the public interest.

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Mamata to move court today against 'arbitrary' SIR

KOLKATA: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said she would move court against the EC's SIR of electoral rolls, alleging that fear, harassment and administrative arbitrariness linked to the exercise had led to deaths and hospitalisations, as she sharpened her confrontation with the poll body. Addressing a public gathering at Sagar Island Banerjee alleged that technology was being "weaponised" to disenfranchise voters.

SC denies bail to Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam in Delhi riots case

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to grant bail to Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in the case linked to the 2020 Delhi riots, stating that the prosecution's material presents a prima facie case against them under provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). The court observed that both played a significant and formative role in the alleged conspiracy, and therefore statutory restrictions on bail under Section 43D(5) applied.

However, the apex court ordered the release of five other accused — Gulfisha Fatima, Meera Haider, Shifa Ur Rehman, Mohammad Saleem Khan and Shadab Ahmed — after differentiating their alleged involvement. Their bail has been granted with 12 strict conditions.

A bench comprising Justices Aravind Kumar and NV Anjaria emphasized that bail decisions must assess the specific role attributed to each accused, the legitimacy of continued detention, and whether it undermines the prosecution's case. While acknowledging concerns related to personal liberty and prolonged incarceration, the court stressed that when prosecution material indicates a prima facie offence under UAPA, legislative restrictions prevail.

The court clarified that bail hearings are not meant to evaluate defences, but to determine whether the allegations reasonably connect the accused to the alleged conspiracy.

In a post on X, Umar's partner Banojyotsna Lahiri quoted him as saying "...this is life now," I am really happy for the others, who got bail! So relieved." ,When she informed him that she would come to meet him the next day in jail, Umar replied, "Good good, aa jana. Ab yahi zindagi hai'(Good, do come, this is life now)."

Opposition leaders question SC verdict

- Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary M A Baby raised questions regarding the apex court's observation that the activists' incarceration without trial for over five years has not crossed "constitutional impermissibility."
- CPI(M) Rajya Sabha MP John Brittas said the principle that "bail is the rule, jail the exception" clearly does not apply when it comes to certain individuals.
- Communist Party of India (CPI) general secretary D Raja said more than five years in jail without a trial is not justice, it is punishment without adjudication.
- Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MP Manoj Jha said the denial of bail raises "troubling questions."

Hostel warden held, dismissed for 'insulting' Kannada

BENGALURU

A 54-year-old hostel warden at AMC Engineering College in Bengaluru, identified as ex-serviceman P. V. Suresh was arrested after a video surfaced showing him allegedly insulting students for speaking Kannada. The incident occurred when students approached him to complain about poor hygiene in the hostel. Reportedly angered by their use of Kannada, Suresh told them not to speak the language on campus, saying Kannada should only be spoken at home and claiming authority to decide whether Hindi or Kannada should be used.

The video quickly spread on social media, prompting swift action from the college and police. By Monday, the college dismissed him "in the interest of the institution," while Bannerghatta police registered an FIR and produced him before court. Pro-Kannada groups protested on campustermed the issue part of a growing language conflict.

More on page 2

Trial in Renukaswamy murder case deferred to Jan 12

BENGALURU

The trial in the high-profile Renukaswamy murder case was adjourned to January 12 following a brief hearing before the trial court here on Monday. Two of the accused, actor Darshan and Pradosh, appeared before the court through video conferencing, wearing vibhuti on their foreheads.

The proceedings, which had commenced on December 17, could not move forward as the court is yet to rule on an application filed by the prosecution seeking to declare the victim's mother, Rathna Prabha, a hostile witness. The prosecution contended that Rathna Prabha had given statements in court that were inconsistent with her earlier testimony, thereby weakening the case. According to the prosecution, her deposition appeared to contradict crucial aspects of the charges framed against the accused. On these grounds, it sought the court's permission to treat her as a hostile witness, which would allow the prosecution to cross-examine her.

The court was expected to decide on the application on Monday. However, after hearing preliminary submissions, it chose to defer further proceedings for January 12.

VIOLENCE AGAINST MINORITIES

Hindu journalist shot dead in Bangladesh

DHAKA

A Hindu factory owner and acting editor of a local newspaper was shot dead by unidentified attackers in Bangladesh on Monday evening, marking another violent incident targeting a member of the minority community.

The victim, 45-year-old Rana Pratap, was killed around 6 pm in the Kopalia Bazar area of Manirampur in Jashore district. According to officials, a group of men arrived on a motorcycle, called Pratap, out of his ice factory, took him into a nearby alley, and shot him in the head at close range before escaping.

Local residents told reporters that the attackers briefly argued with Pratap before opening fire. Pratap had been running the Kopalia Bazar ice factory for two years and was also serving as acting editor of the daily BD Khobor, published from Narail district.

The newspaper's news editor, Abul Kashem, confirmed that Pratap had previously faced several cases but was acquitted in all of them, stating that he could not determine the motive behind the killing.

The incident comes amid rising concern over attacks on minorities in Bangladesh, following recent reports of sexual assault and multiple murders of Hindu community members, drawing criticism of the interim government's handling of minority protection.

Hindu widow gang-raped, tied to tree

Dhaka: A 40-year-old Hindu widow in Bangladesh was reportedly gang-raped and brutally assaulted in Kaliganj, Jhenaidah district. On Saturday evening, Shahin and his associate Hasan stormed into her home while two relatives were visiting, raped her, and demanded 50,000 taka. When she refused, they allegedly assaulted the visitors, forced them away, and tied her to a tree.

Tiger census begins across K'taka forests: Min Khandre

BIDAR

The process of estimating the population of tigers and other carnivorous animals began across Karnataka's forest areas on Monday, State Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre said.

The large-scale exercise will cover all major tiger reserves in the State, including Kali, Bhadra, Nagarahole, Bandipur and the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve. The nationwide tiger estimation is conducted once every four years, and the ongoing exercise is the sixth such assessment after earlier rounds in 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018 and 2022.

Khandre said Karnataka had earlier reported around 563 tigers, placing it second in the country in terms of tiger population. "This estimation will be carried out in patrol areas of all 38 forest divisions across every forest range in the State," he said.

According to the minister, teams of three members each

will patrol forest areas for three days from January 5, covering about five kilometres daily. They will collect field evidence such as pugmarks, scat and direct sightings of tigers, leopards and other carnivores, along with elephants.

A second phase of the exercise will be conducted from January 15 to 17 in 14 forest divisions to record direct sightings of herbivorous animals, including deer, sambar, gaur and wild buffalo. The data collected will help identify suitable locations for installing camera traps.

Tiger Project Director Ramesh Kumar has been appointed as the nodal officer to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and will oversee the entire exercise.

QUICK READ

Drivers Fight like Rowdies on Bengaluru Road

Bengaluru

A shameful incident was reported in Bengaluru after an auto-rickshaw driver and a BMTC bus driver were seen fighting in the middle of a busy road, causing public outrage. The incident occurred on Airport Road, where both vehicles were stopped mid-way as the drivers engaged in a physical altercation. A video of the fight has since gone viral on social media. Shockingly, the BMTC bus was carrying passengers at the time, who were left stranded as the drivers behaved like rowdies in full public view. The confrontation led to traffic congestion on the stretch, inconveniencing commuters. The incident has drawn criticism over the lack of professionalism and raised concerns about commuter safety.

Hidden Camera Found in Theatre Toilet: Accused Caught

Bengaluru

Panic and outrage broke out at Sandhya Theatre in Bengaluru after a hidden camera was found in the women's toilet. The incident occurred during a screening of the re-released film Nuvvu Naaku Nachao, which drew a large crowd. Women who went to the restroom noticed the camera and immediately alerted locals. A minor boy allegedly involved was caught by the public, beaten, and later handed over to the police. Madiwala police have registered a case and launched an investigation into the incident.

Bicycle Thieves Caught on CCTV in Whitefield

Bengaluru

A bicycle theft incident has been reported from Immadihalli in Whitefield, where two bicycles were stolen from a residential premises around 2.30 am on January 1. The theft was captured on CCTV cameras installed in the area. Police said bicycles parked inside house compounds are often targeted by such criminals. They have urged residents to follow safety measures while parking two-wheelers and bicycles and to install CCTV cameras to help deter theft and trace culprits.

Stone-Pelting at Om Shakti Devotees: All Accused Arrested

Incidents threatening communal harmony recur in city despite heightened vigilance

BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister Dr G. Parameshwara on Monday said that all those involved in the stone-pelting incident targeting Om Shakti devotees in JJR Nagar have been arrested and assured strict action in accordance with the law. He stated that four to five boys, aged between 15 and 17 years, were responsible for the incident and that the case falls under juvenile delinquency.

Speaking to media persons, the Home Minister said the incident occurred on Sunday night near the Om Shakti temple in VS Garden, JJR Nagar, when miscreants allegedly pelted stones at devotees and the chariot while a religious procession was underway. "Four or five young boys indulged in stone pelting. All of them have already been arrested, and the police will proceed further as per legal provisions," he said.

According to police sources, stones were thrown at the chariot and the Om Shakti Maladharis during the procession, injuring a child, a young woman and an elderly woman. A child wearing an Om Shakti garland was also reportedly targeted. The accused fled the spot immediately after the attack but were later traced and taken into custody.

Following the incident, members of the Om Shakti Maladhari community gathered in front of the JJR Nagar police station and staged a protest, demanding immediate arrests and stringent action against those responsible. Protesters alleged that the stone pelting was carried out by individuals from another community and claimed it was an attempt to disrupt religious observances.

Dr Parameshwara appealed for calm and reiterated the government's commitment to maintaining communal harmony. "Anyone who disturbs religious practices or attempts to disrupt communal harmony will be dealt with strictly as per law," he said.

Emphasising democratic values, the Home Minister added that all religions are given equal freedom to observe their respective festivals and traditions, and any attempt to violate this principle would not be tolerated.

Warm Nights Surprise B'luru, IMD Says Winter Chill Will Return Soon

BENGALURU

Bengaluru experienced an unusual spell of warm nights over the weekend, with minimum temperatures rising sharply to 17.4°C, sparking concerns among residents that summer might be setting in earlier than usual. Just a few days ago, night temperatures in the city had dipped to around 12°C, typical of peak winter conditions.

However, scientists from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) have reassured citizens that the sudden rise is temporary and does not mark the end of winter. According to IMD officials, colder conditions are expected to return within the next two to three weeks, including in Bengaluru and other parts of south interior Karnataka.

The brief warming has been attributed mainly to easterly winds blowing in from the Bay of Bengal. These winds have carried additional moisture into the region, leading to increased cloud cover over Bengaluru. The cloudy skies acted as a blanket overnight, reducing the loss of heat from the earth's surface and resulting in higher minimum temperatures.

Meteorologists noted that several weather systems are currently influencing the region. An upper-air cyclonic circulation over the Bay of Bengal, a trough extending up to the Tamil Nadu coast, and another system affecting coastal Karnataka have together contributed to overcast conditions, warmer nights, and largely dry weather across Bengaluru and neighbouring districts.

While the city recorded milder night temperatures, the situation was different in other parts of the state. Central and north interior Karnataka continued to experience sharp cold conditions, with dense fog reported during late night and early morning hours. In contrast, districts such as Mysuru, Mandya and Chamarajanagar received isolated rainfall over the past couple of days.

IMD officials reiterated that winter conditions are expected to persist until the end of January. Minimum temperatures in Bengaluru are likely to dip again after January 5 or 6, with cold-wave conditions first affecting north interior Karnataka before gradually spreading southward. The chill is expected to ease only from the first week of February, they said.

5 Sub-Registrars Suspended Over Illegal Property Registrations

BENGALURU

The State government has uncovered a major property registration scam linked to the e-khata system, leading to the suspension of five sub-registrars after officials detected the fraudulent registration of around 1,332 properties over a one-year period. The irregularities reportedly occurred between December 6, 2024, and December 5, 2025.

According to officials, the Department of Stamps and Registrations suspended the officers for their alleged role in misusing the Kaveri 2.0 portal, failing to import mandatory e-khata details from the e-Swathu software, and facilitating illegal registration of sale deeds. The suspended officials have been identified as Ravi Sankana Gouda, N. Satish Kumar, Sridhar (First Division Assistant and incharge Sub-Registrar), Girish Chandra and R. Prabhavathi. The e-khata system was introduced with much fanfare as a digital safeguard to curb property fraud by ensuring that registrations could not proceed without valid ownership records. However, the scam came to light following a complaint by the executive director of the Centre for Smart Governance (CSG), the agency that provides technology solutions to government departments.

Kogilu Demolition: House Built Illegally: Krishna Byre Gowda

After Krishna Byre Gowda returned from abroad around 3 am on Monday, Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan's personal secretary, Sarfaraz Khan, visited the minister's residence to discuss the issue of housing allocation for the affected residents.

BENGALURU

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda on Monday acknowledged that houses demolished in Kogilu Layout were constructed illegally, clarifying that the encroached land belongs to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and not the Revenue Department. He said the government's action was in line with its policy of regularly clearing encroachments on public land.

Addressing a press conference at his residence after returning to Bengaluru from an overseas trip, the minister said encroachment clearance is a continuous administrative process. "Whether it is BBMP land or Revenue Department land, encroachments are being cleared on a regular basis. In the Revenue Department, such clearances are carried out every Saturday. Even if it is government land, title deeds cannot be issued for BBMP land," he explained.

Krishna Byre Gowda said the Kogilu case was not an isolated one and that the government routinely clears encroachments to secure public land. At the same time, he noted that several poor and deserving families had been living on the cleared land for many years. "Keeping humanitarian considerations in mind, the Chief Minister has decided to provide housing to the poor who were residing there for a long time," he said.

The minister cautioned against making allegations without evidence, particularly claims that illegal Bangladeshi migrants were living in the area. "We should not make statements based on speculation. Let the police investigate whether people from outside the state are involved," he said, adding that anyone found to be involved in illegal activities should face legal action, irrespective of political affiliation. "If BJP workers are involved, action should be taken against them as well," he added.

Krishna Byre Gowda also pointed out that illegal constructions often take place due to negligence by local bodies and the support extended by certain politicians. He stressed the need for accountability at all levels to prevent such situations from recurring.

He said the process of allotting alternative housing to eligible residents of Kogilu Layout was delayed as he was abroad. "The role of local MLAs is crucial in plot allocation and decision-making. The government was awaiting my inputs before proceeding," he said.

Orange Line Metro Work Yet to Begin a Yr after Approval

BENGALURU

More than a year after the Central government gave the green signal to Bengaluru's much-awaited Orange Line Metro project, construction work is yet to begin, raising serious concerns over mounting financial losses. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone for the project, creating high expectations of early execution. However, Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) is yet to invite tenders for the civil works.

As of now, one year and 123 days have passed since the project received approval, but ground-level progress remains negligible. Sources said the continued delay is proving expensive, with BMRCL reportedly facing an additional financial burden of nearly ₹2 crore for every day the project is stalled. At this rate, a delay of 487 days could translate into an extra cost of around ₹974 crore.

The Central government had accorded approval for Phase III of the Orange Line on August 16, 2024. Despite this, tenders for civil construction have not yet been floated. Officials attribute the delay to the State government's decision to develop the entire corridor as a double-decker structure, combining metro and road infrastructure. While the move is aimed at easing traffic congestion, it has significantly escalated project costs.

The double-decker decision is expected to require an additional ₹9,000 crore, pushing the financial burden higher and complicating the tendering process. Sources indicated that prolonged delays could further inflate tender costs by thousands of crores due to rising material prices and interest components. The original Orange Line project was estimated to cost ₹15,611 crore, but the delay alone could add at least ₹500 crore more to the overall expenditure.

Bolero Collides With Car, Two Youths Die

BENGALURU

Two youths were killed when a Bolero collided with a car near Machohalli on Magadi Road. The deceased have been identified as Gagan (27) from Channarayapatna, who worked at a private bar in Madanayakanahalli, and Darshan (26), a driver for a chicken supply vehicle. The three youths were travelling to a friend's house near Electronic City when the Bolero, coming from the opposite direction, struck their car.

'Brahmins Are Self-Sacrificing, Need Greater Unity'

BENGALURU

Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission Chairman RV Deshpande on Sunday said that Brahmins are widely recognised as a self-sacrificing community because of their strong spirit of service, but stressed the need for greater unity and better organisation within the community.

He was speaking after inaugurating the Viprotsava–2026 and Bhargava Bhushan Award ceremony organised by the Akhil Bharatiya Brahmin Mahasangh at Gayana Samaja. Deshpande said unity is the foundation of strength in any organisation and the same principle applies to the Brahmin community.

"For the development of society as a whole, internal differences must be set aside and people should come together in an organised manner," he said, adding that collective effort was essential for progress. Emphasising the importance of education, Deshpande urged the community to ensure quality education for its children despite challenges. He also advised parents to focus on skill development and employability, rather than allowing youth to remain idle at home.

Mahasangh office bearers, community leaders and several members of the Brahmin community were present at the programme.

Eye Infection Spreads in City, Triggers Health Scare

BENGALURU

Bengaluru is witnessing a rapid rise in cases of "Madras Eye," also known as Pink Eye or conjunctivitis, with doctors attributing the surge to recent cold weather conditions and increased humidity in the atmosphere. Health experts say changing climatic patterns are creating favourable conditions for viral infections, which are now directly affecting the eyes, particularly among school-going children.

Doctors explained that Madras Eye is a highly contagious viral infection that spreads easily through contact. Common symptoms include redness of the eyes, severe irritation or burning sensation, excessive watering, sensitivity to light and blurred vision. Infected individuals may also experience discomfort while reading or focusing on bright objects.

Medical professionals have strongly advised the public not to ignore symptoms or resort to self-medication and home remedies.

LANGUAGE CONTROVERSY ERUPTS

Kannada Row: Hostel Warden Held After Warning Student

Continued from page 1

A language row erupted in Bengaluru after a private college hostel allegedly warned students against speaking Kannada, triggering widespread outrage, protests and swift police action. The incident, reported from a women's hostel linked to AMC College on Bannerghatta Road, came to light after a video of students confronting the hostel warden went viral on social media.

According to students, the hostel warden allegedly instructed them not to speak Kannada within the hostel premises and told them to "speak at home" if they wished to converse in the language. The students claimed they were instead asked to communicate only in Hindi, which they described as disrespectful to Kannada and the local culture. The alleged remarks shocked several women students and immediately led to protests inside the hostel.

Visuals showed students surrounding the warden and questioning her instructions, demanding an explanation. The confrontation quickly escalated into a larger issue as the video spread online, drawing sharp reactions from the public and Kannada organisations. Many termed the incident an insult to Kannadigas and an attack on linguistic identity in the state capital.

Kannada groups condemned the alleged warning and announced protests against the college management. Activists gathered near the campus and prepared to stage a siege, demanding strict action against those responsible. They insisted that Bengaluru, being the capital of Karnataka, must respect Kannada and its speakers.

Following complaints from students, Bannerghatta police registered a case and arrested the hostel warden. Police officials said an investigation is underway to ascertain the exact sequence of events and whether any additional violations occurred. The arrest helped defuse tensions, though protests continued demanding accountability.

Under mounting pressure, the AMC College management suspended the hostel warden, stating that her conduct, if proven, was unacceptable and contrary to the institution's values. However, Kannada organisations said suspension alone was insufficient and called for firm measures to prevent similar incidents in the future.

QUICK READ

S. Janaki Honored with Bidari Datta Award

Bidar

Renowned playback singer S. Janaki Amma has been selected for the Bidari Datta Award, which will be presented during the state-level Bidari Utsav to be held in the city from January 9 to 11. This was announced by Rekha Apparao Saudi, President of the Bidar District Cultural Forum. S. Janaki has sung more than 50,000 songs in over 17 languages, including Kannada, Telugu, and Tamil. For her outstanding contribution to Kannada cinema, she is popularly known as the "Nightingale of Kannada Cinema." Considering her immense contribution to the field of music, especially playback singing, the committee has decided to honor her with this prestigious award, the release said.

AIKKMS Protest Over Arrests of Activists

Kalaburagi

Members of the Government Medical College Establishment Struggle Committee staged a protest in the city on the 5th, demanding the release of over 20 activists who had been detained. The protesters, organized by the All India Karnataka Medical Struggle Committee (AIKKMS), condemned the arrests and urged authorities to immediately free the detained members. They emphasized that the activists were peacefully fighting for the establishment of a government medical college and that their detention was unjust. The protest highlighted the ongoing struggle of local youth and residents who have been campaigning for better educational infrastructure in Vijayapura. The AIKKMS warned that demonstrations would continue until all detained activists were released.

Complete All Works by March: Minister Khandre

He urged officials to improve education, use funds properly, complete projects, and allocate land efficiently

BIDAR

Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister and Bidar District In-charge Minister Eshwar B. Khandre directed officials of all departments to complete all ongoing works and schemes by March and achieve the set targets.

He was speaking while chairing the quarterly Karnataka Development Programme (KDP) review meeting held on Monday at the District Panchayat hall. As the financial year is coming to an end, he asked officials to be proactive and ensure all pending projects are completed successfully.

To improve educational standards in Bidar district, he instructed education department officials to take special steps, as SSLC and PUC exams are approaching, and focus on improving results.

He said funds allocated by the Kalyana Karnataka Development Board must be used properly. He expressed concern over delays in re-submitting proposals under the Micro scheme, and asked officials to recheck and send proposals within five days.

He stressed completing irrigation projects and addressing complaints related to Jal Jeevan Mission works by ensuring quality execution. Land has been identified for a district stadium, and 10 acres will soon be handed over for the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Study Centre.

> The minister informed that ₹277 crore crop compensation has already been credited to the accounts of 1.92 lakh farmers. Compensation of ₹80 lakh for about 5,000 farmers is pending due to technical issues and efforts are ongoing to resolve them.

Dilapidated school buildings should be demolished, and repairs taken up. About ₹10 crore is required for school repairs, to be handled under KKRDB funds. Repairs to 1,317 classrooms are underway.

He urged officials to work sincerely for the development of farmers, poor people, women, SC/STs, and backward communities.

BJP MLA and Congress MLC Clash During KDP Meeting

BIDAR

A tense situation unfolded during the district-level quarterly progress review (KDP) meeting on Monday at the District Panchayat office in Bidar when BJP MLA from Humnabad, Dr. Siddalingappa Patil, and Congress MLC Bhimarav Patil got into a heated argument that escalated into a physical confrontation. Verbal abuse and accusations were exchanged, creating chaos in the meeting hall.

The clash erupted while discussions were underway on forest land issues in the Humnabad constituency. As both leaders participated in the debate, disagreements turned aggressive. When Dr. Siddalingappa Patil was speaking, Bhimarav Patil strongly objected, stood up, and moved toward him. The disagreement quickly escalated into a physical scuffle, with both leaders grabbing each other and shouting loudly. Bhimarav Patil's brother, MLC Dr. Chandrashekar Patil, stepped in to support him. The situation was eventually brought under control when Additional Superintendent of Police Chandrakant Poojari intervened and separated the leaders. District In-charge Minister Eshwar B. Khandre, Deputy Commissioner Shilpa Sharma, and Superintendent of Police Pradeep Gunti also stepped down from the dais to help calm tensions. Due to the disruption, the meeting was postponed indefinitely, and no further discussions were conducted.

The argument turned physical; police and officials intervened, calming tensions, but the meeting was postponed amid Humnabad unrest.

The incident quickly spread across Humnabad, creating a tense atmosphere in the leaders' home constituency. Supporters of both leaders gathered outside their residences in large numbers, raising concerns about potential unrest. As a precaution, senior police officials were deployed, and strict security arrangements were put in place to maintain law and order. The authorities are monitoring the situation closely to prevent further escalation and ensure public safety.

The clash has sparked concern over political decorum during official meetings and highlighted the need for calm and dialogue in resolving contentious issues.

Dispute in KDP Meeting Blamed on Minister's Failures: Bhagavant Khuba

BIDAR

Former Union Minister Bhagavant Khuba criticized the quarrel between two MLAs during the quarterly Kalyana Karnataka Development Board (KDP) meeting chaired by District In-Charge Minister Eshwar B. Khandre, calling it a shameful incident. He said personal matters should never be brought into official meetings, yet Khandre allowed this dispute to occur, allegedly using it to cover up his own administrative failures. Khuba emphasized that it is the chairperson's responsibility to set the agenda and prioritize important district issues, but Khandre focused on personal conflicts, provoking existing rivalries instead.

Khuba pointed out that critical matters, such as delayed crop compensation for farmers, unpaid bills from sugar factories, and pending loans from DCC Bank, were neglected. Farmers remain anxious about payments per ton of sugar, and these essential topics should have been addressed first. By allowing the quarrel, Khandre reportedly diverted attention from these pressing issues.

Khuba, who has served as an MP and Union Minister for over ten years, stated that he has chaired numerous meetings with political rivals present without incidents of personal conflicts or disruptions. He condemned Khandre for letting the quarrel overshadow essential discussions, calling it a clear example of administrative failure. He warned that such tactics may be used to hide underperformance in the district's development work.

New Jail Chief Appointed Following Viral 'Royal Treatment'

KALABURAGI

Following a viral video allegedly showing prisoners receiving "royal treatment" at the Kalaburagi Central Jail, the Karnataka government has appointed Rajesh Kamble as the new Superintendent of the jail. An official order was issued by B.K. Bhuvanendrakumar, Under Secretary of the Home Department (Prisons and Films). Rajesh Kamble, who was working as Assistant Superintendent at Ramanagara Jail, has been promoted and posted as Superintendent of Kalaburagi Central Jail. The current Superintendent, Dr. Anita, has not been given a new posting yet, and no separate government order regarding her has been issued so far. A few days ago, videos from inside the Kalaburagi Central Jail went viral, allegedly showing inmates gambling and consuming cigarettes and alcohol.

Two Arrested in House Burglary Case

VIJAYAPURA

The police have arrested two accused in connection with a house burglary that took place in Masooti village of Kolhar taluk in September last year.

The arrested persons have been identified as Kaladagi Abdulla (30) and Heera (29) from Lokapur. Police have recovered two motorcycles used in the crime and 40 grams of gold jewellery worth ₹4,50,000 from the accused.

According to the police, on September 19, the accused broke open the door of Danamma's house in Masooti village and fled after stealing gold ornaments weighing 40 grams. A case was registered at the Kudgi Police Station under Crime No. 69/2025, sections 331(3), 331(4), and 305 of the BNS–2023.

Lokayukta Criticizes Delay in Land Allotment for Ex-Servicemen

KALABURAGI

Lokayukta Justice B.S. Patil expressed strong displeasure over the district administration's failure to allot land to ex-servicemen while keeping many applications pending.

Justice Patil visited the District Commissioner's office on Monday and spent nearly an hour reviewing files across various departments. Out of 55 applications for land, only seven had been processed and allotted. He said it was unacceptable that ex-servicemen, who had sacrificed for the nation and their families, were left waiting. He instructed Additional District Commissioner Rayappa Hunasagi to expedite the remaining applications and submit a report promptly.

During his inspection, Justice Patil reviewed files related to lakes, land dispute cases, MLA local area development fund usage, CSR projects, PD accounts, and pension departments. He raised concerns about incomplete or delayed information and reminded officials that accurate reporting is essential. Out of 46 pending cases in certain departments, 18 were yet to be resolved. He emphasized that even minor errors or delays in data reporting could lead to accountability issues.

Justice Patil also addressed a longstanding grievance regarding land records. A resident informed him that for 25 years, their rightful inheritance had not been correctly recorded in the land registry. Justice Patil took the matter seriously and instructed that the issue be resolved within one week, with a report submitted immediately.

The Lokayukta was accompanied by ADIGP Manish Kharbikar, Kalaburagi SP Siddaraju, and other Lokayukta police officials during the visit. Justice Patil stressed the importance of efficient administration and timely resolution of pending issues, especially for ex-servicemen and the public relying on government services.

"If Schools Survive, the Nation Survives," Says Chidanand Sali

LINGSUGUR

Central Sahitya Akademi member Chidanand Sali said that rural India can survive only if schools and the education system are protected.

He was speaking at a seminar titled "Secondary Education: A Reassessment", organized on Sunday as part of the silver jubilee celebrations of Basaveshwara College in the town. He pointed out that in the Kalyana Karnataka region, people struggle for basic necessities like food, and education is often neglected. He expressed concern that schools are being closed in the name of KPS Magnet Schools, and questioned how quality results can be expected when teachers are burdened with multiple responsibilities.

Education thinker Aravind Chokkadi from Moodbidri also spoke at the event. He said the entire education system is under extreme pressure. To improve it, he suggested simplifying textbook content, bringing changes to the traditional evaluation system, and providing proper training for parents as well. He emphasized that regardless of the medium of instruction, the focus should be on teaching students effectively.

Stone Included in Raichur Utsav Logo

MUSKI

Muski has finally been given due recognition in the Raichur Utsav logo. The historic importance of Muski has now been reflected in the festival's logo design.

When the draft logo was prepared, it did not include any symbol representing Muski's historical significance, especially the famous Ashokan rock inscription. Noticing this omission, MLA R. Basanagouda Turvihal advised the concerned officials to include the Muski stone in the logo.

Muski is an internationally known historical site because of the Ashokan inscription, which drew global attention. The MLA pointed out to the Deputy Commissioner that the logo should feature either a representation of the Ashokan inscription or the three-faced swan symbol found on the wall of the Mallikarjuna Temple in Muski, which is also used by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

Following this suggestion, a new logo was designed and released. The revised logo includes the three-faced swan image from the wall of the Mallikarjuna Temple located on Muski hill, thereby highlighting Muski's rich historical and cultural heritage.

PURITY REVEALS GOD

Monthly Sharana Sangama Program at Lingayat Mahamath

BIDAR

Pujya Shri Prabhudeva Mahaswamiji, head of the Lingayat Mahamath, emphasized the importance of a pure mind to realize God during the monthly Sharana Sangama program at the Lingayat Mahamath in Hulasur taluk. He explained that God is omnipotent, present everywhere, formless, and beyond qualities. Just as a reflection is visible only in clear water, God resides only in a pure and clean mind. To experience God, one must let go of attachment to the body. When our thoughts, speech, and actions (kaya, vacha, manasa) are pure, God dwells within us.

Highlighting true human values, he said that real adornment lies in observing elders and gurus with the eyes, listening to the experiences of Sharanas with the ears, offering service (dasoha) with the hands, and walking on the path of truth with the feet. Living among Sharanas is the ultimate ornament of life, yet people often forget this and pursue material pleasures, which lead only to sorrow and distance from God.

Purushakatte Channabasavanna added that for a life to be truly sacred, the mind should follow our guidance, not the other way around. The mind rejoices in praise but resents even truthful criticism. Praise may inflate the ego without fostering genuine growth, while acceptance of guidance requires humility.

The program was inaugurated by Omkar Biradar, and the Shatsthala flag hoisting was performed by Jaikumar Biradar. Newly elected president of Neelamman Balaga, Sharane Sangeeta Shikhareshwar Biradar, along with other members, were felicitated during the event. Numerous devotees participated in the gathering, contributing to the spiritual and communal atmosphere of the program.

Indi–Almel Road in Ruins, Traffic Severely Affected

INDI

The 30-kilometer stretch of the Indi–Almel road, connecting Pandharpur in Maharashtra and Gangapur in Karnataka, has completely deteriorated, making vehicle movement extremely difficult. Even two-wheelers are struggling to pass safely.

Thanks to the efforts of MLA Yashwantharayagouda Patil, 8 kilometers of this road have been repaired with proper widening, leaving 22 kilometers still in poor condition. Over the past two months, continuous traffic of sugarcane-laden tractors and lorries has worsened the already fragile road.

Public complaints have prompted the Public Works Department to temporarily fill potholes with gravel, but these fixes last only about a week before the potholes return. Dust from these temporary repairs spreads to nearby fields, damaging crops like chickpeas, cotton, wheat, jowar, and maize. Farmers have lodged complaints about this. Several bridges along the route are also damaged.

QUICK READ

Sullia tragedy: Mother and child found dead in pond

Mangaluru

A heartbreaking incident occurred in Sullia's Bellare police limits where the bodies of a woman and her three-year-old daughter were found in a pond near their house. The deceased have been identified as Madhushri (34) from Kodiyala village and her daughter Dhanvi. Madhushri, who lived with her husband Harish and family, had gone to sleep after finishing household work but was found missing with the child the next morning. During the search, both were discovered dead in the pond. It is suspected that she jumped into the pond with the child tied to her. Police have registered a case of suicide and suspected murder and are investigating.

Davanagere police nab duo; over 1 kg ganja seized

Davanagere

In Davanagere, police arrested two men who were seen running in a crowded public area carrying deadly weapons. The accused have been identified as Rakesh and Sahil. Earlier, a clash had broken out in Davanagere's Nittuvalli Shrirama Badavane three days ago, and the duo reportedly arrived in an auto armed with machetes and long knives to attack rival youths. Their actions were captured on CCTV, helping police trace them. During the investigation, officers searched their room and discovered over one kilogram of ganja worth around ₹60,000, along with two machetes and other items. A case has been registered at the KTJ Nagar police station, and further investigation is underway.

Sriramulu alleges attempts to cover post-mortem findings

Former minister Sriramulu alleged multiple post-mortems and attempts to hide bullet evidence in the Ballari clash death case

BALLARI

Former minister B. Sriramulu has levelled serious allegations regarding the post-mortem conducted on Rajasekhar, the Congress worker who died during the recent Ballari clashes. Speaking to the media, he claimed that the post-mortem was not done just once but three to four times. He alleged that during one of the examinations, there was a conspiracy to suppress the truth and efforts were made to close the case without properly recovering the bullet. According to him, some tried to frame the situation in such a way that the bullet could not be retrieved.

Sriramulu said that initially no bullet was found during the first post-mortem, and attempts were made to proceed with the funeral hurriedly. However, senior officials, police officers, and intelligence authorities insisted on a re-examination, leading to repeated post-mortems, after which the bullet was finally recovered. He accused several political figures of trying to hide evidence and claimed that since Congress MLAs are part of the government, responsibility lies with the ruling party.

He further alleged that the incident began due to the actions of Bharat Reddy and claimed that the shot which killed the youth was fired by his security personnel. Sriramulu slammed Congress leaders for initially blaming the BJP while allegedly trying to cover up facts even during the post-mortem process.

Responding to questions about weapons at the spot, he said many had gathered with sticks, stones, and even petrol bombs near Janardhan Reddy's residence, despite police presence. Meanwhile, police are continuing investigations, and a bomb disposal squad from Hubballi has inspected the incident site to trace fired bullets and metallic evidence from the January 1 clash, during which the Congress worker lost his life.

Bommai urges quick maize incentive payment for farmers

GADAG

Former Chief Minister and MP Basavaraj Bommai has demanded that the Rs 250 incentive for farmers growing maize be directly deposited into their bank accounts, avoiding middlemen and delays. He also urged that the maize procurement process be completed within a week to reduce farmers' distress.

Bommai made the remarks while addressing a meeting of district collectors and farmer leaders at the Gadag District Collector's office. The session was held to launch a maize procurement center and address shortcomings in the system. He noted that last year, maize prices were over Rs 2,000 per quintal, but this year, prices have dropped sharply. Farmers in Gadag, especially in Lakshmeshwar, protested under the leadership of local Swamijis. The government had pledged to purchase 10 lakh metric tons of maize, but less than one lakh tons has been bought so far. Bommai said the purchase centers lack proper systems and transparency, and farmers are left uninformed about the Rs 250 incentive scheme.

"Whoever brings maize to the center should get it purchased immediately. We must ensure the scheme reaches farmers directly without agents taking advantage.

RUDSET Institute in Chitradurga invites unemployed rural youth aged 19–45 for free 31-day tailoring training with food and accommodation

Complete details of real farmers must be collected, and money should be deposited into their accounts without bias, politics, or discrimination," Bommai said. He instructed district collectors to complete the purchase process within a week.

MLA C.C. Patil added that government subsidies should reach eligible farmers and the process should be free of irregularities. District Collector C.N. Sridhara clarified that the market price would be Rs 1,900 per quintal or less, with a maximum Rs 250 per quintal incentive, implemented through the Karnataka State Cooperative Federation Limited.

The meeting was attended by Legislative Council Member Dr. Chandru Lamani, S.V. Sankanura, District Superintendent of Police Rohan Jagadeesh, officials, and farmers. Bommai emphasized that timely payments and transparent implementation were essential to restore farmers' trust and ensure the state government's maize scheme succeeds.

Teacher honoured with 'South India Savitribai Phule Best Teacher Award'

CHITRADURGA

B. Vimalakshi, in-charge headmistress of the Government Higher Primary School at Swami Vivekananda Nagar in Chitradurga and Vice President of the Karnataka State Government Employees Association, has been conferred the prestigious "South India Savitribai Phule Best Teacher Award." The honour was presented during Savitribai Phule's birth anniversary celebrations held in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, by the Guru Chaitanya Upadhyaya Association.

With 24 years of dedicated service in teaching, Vimalakshi has focused on improving students' learning standards and overall school development. Through donors and community support, she has helped the school gain essential facilities such as toilets, a library, notebooks, musical instruments, and yoga uniforms for students. She has also earned recognition as an impressive anchor at several state-level government programs.

Vimalakshi has excelled beyond academics as well. She has won first place twice and second place three times in badminton competitions at state-level sports meets organised by the Government Employees Association. A long-time yoga practitioner, she has also taken part in yoga training programs telecast on Chandana channel and inspired children by encouraging yoga practice in schools.

Actively involved in social initiatives, she played a key role in advocating menstrual leave for women employees, successfully raising the issue with state authorities. Her committed service across multiple fields has earned her numerous awards and great appreciation.

Farmers lay siege to BTDA office with bullock cart

BAGALKOT

Farmers in Bagalkote staged a dramatic protest on Monday by surrounding the Bagalkote Town Development Authority (BTDA) office with a bullock cart, expressing anger over their long-pending grievances. The protest was led by farmers from Nandeeshwara Nagar, who alleged that untreated sewage water has been repeatedly entering their agricultural lands, damaging crops spread across several acres. Despite submitting multiple complaints and appeals to BTDA officials, the issue reportedly remained unresolved, pushing the farmers to intensify their agitation.

Frustrated by official inaction, the farmers marched to the BTDA office with a bullock cart as a symbolic show of resistance and staged a sit-in, preventing officials from entering the premises. They voiced strong resentment, demanding immediate measures to stop sewage flow into farmlands and compensation for losses incurred.

Upon receiving information, police arrived at the spot and attempted to pacify the protesters, urging them to withdraw. However, the farmers remained firm, insisting on a concrete assurance before ending their protest. After detailed discussions, BTDA authorities assured them that the problem would be addressed and necessary steps would be taken at the earliest. Following this assurance, the farmers dispersed peacefully, while maintaining that they would resume their agitation if corrective action is delayed.

Constitution ensures right to live with dignity: Civil Judge Anand M

MANDYA

Every human life is invaluable, and the Indian Constitution grants every citizen the right to live with dignity, said District Legal Services Authority Member-Secretary and Senior Civil Judge Anand M. He was speaking after inaugurating the 37th National Road Safety Campaign 2026, themed "Road Safety – Saves Life," held at the Regional Transport Office premises in Mandya.

He stressed that strictly following traffic rules is essential to protect both our lives and the lives of others. Despite speed regulations on major highways, accident cases continue to rise, he noted, urging the public to pledge to follow road safety measures and help reduce mishaps. Anand expressed concern that many parents irresponsibly allow underage children to ride vehicles, leading to several fatal accidents. Driving without a license is a punishable offence, attracting heavy fines up to ₹25,000 and possible imprisonment for parents, he warned. He appealed to motorists not to drink and drive, avoid violating signals, and refrain from wasting hard-earned money on penalties.

Additional police officer Thimmayya revealed that the district recorded 496 fatal accidents in 2025, claiming 547 lives, while over 3,000 minor accidents caused severe injuries and disabilities, with many young people involved. He urged careful driving, maintaining speed limits, and prioritizing safety.

Regional Transport Officer Hemavathi said the campaign aims to create awareness among citizens and students. She stressed wearing helmets, seatbelts, obeying signals, and avoiding traffic violations to prevent accidents.

Officials and dignitaries administered a road safety pledge and distributed saplings during the program.

Applications invited for free tailoring training

CHITRADURGA

RUDSET Institute in Bank Colony, Chitradurga, has invited applications for a free tailoring training program aimed at helping unemployed rural youth become self-employed.

The 31-day training course will be completely free, including food and accommodation. Interested candidates between 19 and 45 years of age can apply. Applicants must be able to read and write Kannada, possess basic knowledge of tailoring, and have a genuine interest in starting a livelihood. Candidates should attend a direct interview at the RUDSET office on January 7, 2026, with an application containing their address and mobile number, along with Aadhaar card, ration card, caste and income certificates, and a copy of their bank passbook. Preference will be given to those already having basic tailoring skills. For more details, contact: 8618284445 or 8660627785.

Ensure basic facilities for hostel: ZP CEO

CHITRADURGA

At a progress review meeting, Chitradurga Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. S. Akash directed officials to prioritise providing essential facilities to students in government hostels. He said that during visits to various hostels in the district, students had complained that they were not receiving the basic amenities they are entitled to. It is the responsibility of authorities to first ensure that every hostel offers proper living conditions for its students, he stressed.

Presiding over the review meeting held at the Zilla Panchayat hall, he discussed the functioning and management of hostels run under the Social Welfare, Backward Classes Welfare, Minority Welfare and Scheduled Tribes Welfare Departments, as well as Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions.

Dr. Akash instructed officials to ensure clean drinking water, well-maintained toilets, proper cleanliness inside hostel rooms and surrounding premises, hygienic kitchens, and nutritious, tasty food. Strict action will be taken against those who neglect these responsibilities, he warned.

He also emphasised the need to provide effective academic support for SSLC students in hostels and directed officials to take measures such as installing mosquito nets to ensure student safety. Along with infrastructure, a healthy and supportive environment must be created for hostel students, he added.

The meeting was attended by ZP Deputy Secretary Dr. S. Rangaswamy, Social Welfare Department Deputy Director Mallikarjun, Backward Classes Welfare Officer Pushpalatha, District Tribal Welfare Officer Divakar, taluk-level officials, wardens and hostel staff from across the district.

Distorting news is dangerous for media, warns Jayaprakash Hegde

UDUPI

Former minister K. Jayaprakash Hegde cautioned that the trend of twisting and misrepresenting news poses a serious threat to the credibility of the media world. Speaking at the Vaddarse Raghuram Shetty Journalism Award ceremony held at Coastal Paradise Anugraha Hall in Sasthan-Pandeshwar, Kota, he said that news items published in the media remain as permanent records, and correcting errors later is neither easy nor always possible. Therefore, responsibility, accuracy and facts must remain at the heart of journalism, he stressed.

The event was organised by the Brahmavar Taluk Journalists' Association. MLA Kiran Kumar Kodgi inaugurated the programme and said that journalism is a respected profession in society, and those working in this field must perform their duties with sincerity and accountability.

Senior journalist Chidambara Baikampady was honoured with the Vaddarse Raghuram Shetty Journalism Award on the occasion. Expressing gratitude, he recalled his long association with Vaddarse Raghuram Shetty, describing it as a valuable learning experience like a university itself.

HOLISTIC STUDENT GROWTH

Patel School annual day emphasises holistic student devpt

RAMANAGARA

The 22nd Annual Day of Patel English School, located near Kempegowda Circle on Magadi Road, was celebrated with grandeur at the RVCS Convention Hall. Inaugurating the event, Bengaluru MLC and education leader Shri Puttanna said that the joint efforts of parents and teachers are essential for the holistic growth of children. Appreciating the commitment of School Secretary Patel Rajur, he noted that the institution's successful 22-year journey reflects its strong administration and credibility. He also highlighted the important role private educational institutions play in SSLC results, adding that parents' trust in Patel English School is a positive sign.

Parents must continue to support the school by enrolling more children and valuing the institution's contribution to education, he said. He also urged parents to act as their children's first teachers and keep them away from excessive TV and mobile use.

On this occasion, dignitaries on stage released the calendar of Negilayogi Social Service Trust. Ramanagara MLA Iqbal Hussain said extracurricular activities are vital for discovering hidden talents and boosting children's intelligence and confidence. Patel English School has consistently encouraged such initiatives, contributing to students' overall development and academic excellence, he added.

Former MLA and District Guarantee Scheme President Raju K.R., who distributed prizes, said sports and cultural activities enhance physical fitness and skills along with academics. Praising Patel Rajur for raising the school to high standards, he said quality education is clearly reflected in its achievements.

Presiding over the program, Founder-Secretary Patel C. Rajur said the school offers special concessions for students from rural and middle-class backgrounds and urged parents to utilize them. He emphasized the importance of learning English for global communication while also reminding students to always value their mother tongue, Kannada.

MLA Balakrishna apologises for remark against Magadi tahsildar

MLA H.C. Balakrishna apologises to Magadi Tahsildar Sharath Kumar for controversial "slippers" remark during public grievance meeting

RAMANAGARA

MLA H.C. Balakrishna, who recently sparked controversy by stating that he would have the Magadi Tahsildar beaten with slippers by the public if he failed to perform his duties, has now apologised to Tahsildar Sharath Kumar. The MLA had earlier reprimanded the official during a public grievance meeting, warning him in harsh language, which invited widespread criticism.

Participating in a taluk-level government employees' sports meet on Sunday, where the Tahsildar was also present, Balakrishna clarified that his remarks were made in colloquial "village language" without the intention to hurt anyone. He said he had brought the officer to the taluk to serve the people without expecting any personal favour, but expressed frustration when farmers' grievances remained unresolved. "If my words have hurt you, I apologise. My only concern is justice for the people. When people are unhappy, they blame me, not the officers," he said.

The MLA further questioned corruption in administration, asking how farmers could be expected to pay bribes with their hard-earned money. Recalling the respect late IAS officer D.K. Ravi commanded, he lamented that honest officers have become rare today. He stressed that he never demands money from anyone and his only aim is to ensure justice for his constituency.

Balakrishna reiterated that he did not intend to insult officials but spoke out of pain and concern for the public. "If officers work sincerely, I will respect them immensely," he added, emphasising that his remarks were situational rather than personal.

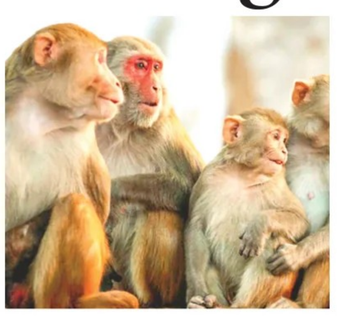
11 monkeys found dead in forest, poisoning suspected

Eleven monkeys were found dead in Devarayanadurga forest over two days; authorities suspect poisoning and are conducting post-mortem investigations

TUMAKURU

A mysterious incident in the Devarayanadurga forest area has left 11 monkeys dead over the past two days, raising concerns among wildlife officials. The carcasses were discovered scattered across the forested region between Devarayanadurga and Durga village. On the first day, seven dead monkeys were found, followed by four more the next day. Initial examinations indicate that the monkeys did not die from any natural disease.

Due to the sudden and unexplained deaths, forest authorities suspect possible poisoning as the cause. In response, a detailed two-day search and investigation were conducted throughout the affected forest area. Authorities



are prioritising a thorough inquiry to determine the exact cause of death.

Currently, post-mortem examinations of the deceased monkeys are being carried out at the Urdigere Animal Hospital. Forest officials are closely monitoring the situation to prevent further incidents and are urging the public to stay away from the forest area until the investigation is complete. The incident has also raised awareness about the safety and conservation of wildlife in the region.

Authorities have confirmed that further steps will be taken based on the post-mortem findings, and necessary measures will be implemented if poisoning is confirmed. Meanwhile, local villagers and environmental groups are cooperating with officials to ensure that similar cases do not occur in the future.

District Commissioner reviews dept progress

CHIKKABALLAPUR

The Deputy Commissioner chaired a comprehensive review meeting with officials from all major departments at the District Administrative Office in Chikkaballapur. During the session, he assessed the progress and functioning of various government departments and emphasised the importance of effective implementation of programmes for the 2025–26 financial year.

Speaking at the meeting, the DC stated that grants released to departments must be utilised efficiently and without delay. He warned that any negligence or unnecessary postponement of development activities would not be tolerated. Officials were instructed to ensure that the allocated funds do not remain unused and that development projects move forward within the planned timelines. He also directed department heads to remain proactive and accountable, reminding them that proper execution of schemes is crucial for the district's overall progress. Highlighting the significance of coordination between departments, he urged officers to work collectively and responsibly to achieve development targets and benefit the public effectively. The DC further called upon officers to extend full cooperation to the district administration to ensure smooth governance and sustained development efforts.

Dist to commemorate Amarashilpi Jakanachari on January 8

CHIKKABALLAPUR

A special commemorative programme honouring legendary sculptor Amarashilpi Jakanachari will be held on January 8 at noon at the Kannada Bhavan in Chikkaballapura. The event is being organised jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat and the Department of Kannada and Culture.

The celebrations will begin with a grand procession at 9:30 am, starting from the historic Shree Jakanachari Karikamba Temple and proceeding to Kannada Bhavan, accompanied by cultural troupes. The programme will be formally inaugurated by Minister for Primary and Secondary Education and District In-Charge Minister Dr M.C. Sudhakar, while Kannada and Culture Minister Shivaraj S. Tangadagi will grace the occasion as chief guest. Chikkaballapura MLA K. Sudhakar will preside.

Several dignitaries, including Members of Parliament, MLAs, MLCs and officials from various Karnataka government boards and cultural academies, will participate. Senior officials from science, technology and education departments, along with district officers, will also attend. Special invitees include representatives of temple architecture associations and cultural organisations.

The programme will feature special lectures highlighting Jakanachari's artistic legacy and his contribution to temple architecture. Social worker Anil Kumar and academic experts will deliver keynote addresses. Numerous cultural, community and heritage organisations will participate.

Regional conference highlights social responsibility in Mandya

MANDYA

A regional conference celebrating community service and humanitarian commitment was successfully held at the KVS Bhavan of Karnataka Sangha in Mandya, organised by the Association of Alliance Clubs International. The event brought together service-minded individuals and organisations dedicated to social welfare initiatives.

Inaugurating the programme, Hospete Urban Development Authority Commissioner Yoganand emphasized that success can only be achieved through hard work, dedication, and sincerity. He urged people to work with commitment in whichever profession or path they choose, without constantly worrying about the outcome. True fulfilment in life, he said, comes not only from earning a livelihood but also from working with purpose and satisfaction.

Reflecting on his personal journey, Yoganand shared that he never lost confidence even during tough times, nor did he become complacent during success. It was consistent effort and constant progress towards goals that helped him reach his present position.

International Alliance Director Nagaraju V. Bairi said the organisation has always recognised achievers and encouraged them to continue their contributions to society. South Multiple Council Vice President K.T. Hanumantu highlighted that Alliance Clubs have consistently supported government schools, prioritising education and healthcare initiatives as part of their social responsibility.

H. Madegowda, along with Alliance leaders Shashidhar Eechagere, K.S. Chandrashekar, S. Ramesh, Rathnamma, Appaji and others were present.

Protest in M'luru condemns US attack on Venezuela

MANGALURU

A protest was held near the Clock Tower in Mangaluru on Monday condemning the United States for attacking the sovereign nation of Venezuela, allegedly abducting President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, and declaring an undeclared war. The demonstration was organised by a coalition of like-minded organisations. Addressing the gathering, CPI(M) district secretary Muneer Katipalla said the US launched the attack to tighten its control over the global oil market by targeting a small South American nation. He termed the alleged abduction of the Venezuelan President as an inhuman act and accused the US of threatening global peace through violence.

Labour leader Sukumar Tokkottu claimed that the US has, for years, created wars and conflicts across various countries to dominate the world's oil trade. He added that the nation has often imposed false charges on countries and exploited their resources. He urged India to strongly oppose the American aggression. Community leader Vasudeva Uchila, Dalit leader M. Devadas and several other representatives from different organisations also spoke at the protest. Leaders including Yadav Shetty, Balakrishna Shetty, Dr Krishna P K, B.K. Imthiyaz, Jayanti Shetty, Prameela, Bharati Bolara and many others participated in the demonstration, expressing solidarity with Venezuela and condemning US policies.

Training on TReDS and ESM to be held on Jan 7

MANDYA

A training programme on Trades Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) and ESM will be organised by the Department of Industries and Commerce on January 7, 2026, at 10:30 am at the PES Engineering College auditorium in Mandya. The session will be highly beneficial for micro, small and medium enterprises involved in manufacturing activities. Entrepreneurs running industrial units are encouraged to participate and make use of this opportunity.

For more information, interested participants may contact the District Industries Centre, Subhash Nagar, opposite Carmel Convent Road, Mandya, or call 08232-200964 / 221358, according to the Joint Director of the District Industries Centre.

NAME CHANGE

I, **ZUNAIRA FATHIMA**, D/o Syed Samiulla Bokhari, residing at No.53, 1st Floor, KEB Layout, 1st Cross, 2nd Main, BTM 1st Stage, Dharmaram College, Bangalore-560029, have changed my name to **ZUNAIRA FATHIMA BOKHARI**, vide affidavit dated: 05.01.2026, before Notary G.DAYANANDA, Bengaluru

CHANGE OF NAME

I,DOROTHY CHANDRASHEKAR W/O V S CHANDRASHEKAR, R/O Hoysala Commanders Retreat, No. 1524, Flat No. B-010, Kodigehalli, Bhandrappa Layout, R.M.V. Extension II Stage, Bangalore North, Bengaluru - 560094, have changed my name from DEEPA CHANDRASHEKHAR alias DOROTHY RODRIGUES to DOROTHY CHANDRASHEKAR for all practical/documentation purposes, vide affidavit dated 03-01-2026 sworn before Advocate & Notary RAVI KUMAR. V., Bangalore, Karnataka.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, JEEVAN BABU RAMESH GEJJALAGERE alias JEEVAN BABU G R S/o RAMESH G T, R/o 1224, Gange Road, 3rd Cross, Kuvempu Nagar, Mysore, Karnataka-570023, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as JEEVAN RAMESH.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, CHARAN S/o K BHASKARA, R/o D No3-4/7, M L A Road, Near Isiri Nilaya, Munnuru, Mangalore, Dakshina, Kannada, Karnataka-575017, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as CHARAN BHASKARA KUTHAR.

Document Lost

Farima Mohammed Anif Saab Age 55 Years 12th Ward New Water Tank Layout Bagepalli Town, Bagepalli Taluk, Chikkaballapur District Pin 561207
The summary of the complaint I filed with Bagepalli Police Station is that on 20/12/25 and I had gone to the Bagepalli Taluk Office to get the vacant plot deed (Assessment No. 2370/ 1-00870/2010-11) in my name xeroxed, but when I came to get the vacant plot deed xeroxed, I lost the original sale deed of my site.
I have filed a complaint and issued a press release requesting the retrieval of the said lost original sale deed.
Last report number
1988316/26
I have filed a complaint and received an acknowledgement of receipt and have requested the retrieval of the said original sale deed.

IN THE COURT OF THE HON'BLE ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPURA
Criminal Misc No.: 988/2025
Petitioner : Shri Prasad N S/o Late Narayanaswamy Age: about 25 years R/o #176, 3rd Ward, Mutsandra, Doddaballapura Town
Respondent : Registrar of Births and Deaths, Tahsildar, Doddaballapur.
PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform the public that the above-named Petitioner has filed a petition before the Hon'ble Court regarding his father, the deceased Narayanaswamy, S/o Late Muniyappa, who died on 23.11.2023 at the address: House No.176, 3rd Ward, Mutsandra, Doddaballapura Town. There are no official records regarding his death, so the applicant has submitted the above petition seeking registration of the date of death in the respondent's births and deaths register under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969. Therefore, if any member of the public has any objection, they are hereby informed to appear before the said Hon'ble Court on 07.02.2026. If they fail to appear, the case will be decided ex parte in their absence.
This notice is issued on under my signature and with the seal of the Court.
By order of the Court
HON'BLE ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPURA
Advocate for Petitionert: **Karthik Yadav G.N.**, Advocate, Opposite Court complex, Rojipura, Doddaballapur

IN THE COURT OF THE CHIEF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE OF ERODE
MCOP No. 49 / 2025
MURUGESAN ... PETITIONER -V/s- 1.RAJASEKAR(31), S/o.Ramu, 208, Gowdanpalaya, Badamanavarthe Kaval, Subramanyapura, Bangalore South, Bangalore, Karnataka State-560061 **...RESPONDENT No.1**
NOTICE To 1st RESPONDENT
The Petitioner Murugesan, S/o.Palanisamy gounder have filed MCOP.No.49/2025 against you for compensation for the injuries sustained by you in Road Traffic Accident that took place on 01.11.2023.
The above case is posted for your (1st respondent) appearance on **20-01-2026** at 10.30 AM before the Hon'ble Chief Judicial Magistrate, Erode. If you do not appear on **20-01-2026** at 10.30 AM, the case will be proceeded in your absence, and an exparte order will be passed against you.
C.T.PRAVIN, Advocate
Erode,
CELL No. 80723 31281, Date:05-01-2026

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact:
080-41209042

ZILLA PANCHAYATH, KOLAR
E-Mail:ceozpkol@gmail.com, Land line No:08152- 240 649
No.ZPK/EST(1)/CR.07/2025-26 Date:24.12.2025
E-Tender Announcement (Through e-Procurement (KTPP) Platform)
For a period of one year from the date of issue of work order from the Zilla Panchayat, Kolar office, E-tender is invited to procure the services of 08 DEOs, 02 drivers and 10 Group D personnel on outsourced basis from a registered Human Resource Institute to operate. Tender has been invited as per this office Ref No. ZPK/EST(1)/CR.07/2025-26 Dated:24.12.2025. Estimated tender value Rs. 59.54 lakhs **Last date for submission of tender: 30.01.2026 5.00 PM** For more details, contact 08152- 240659/9916588015
Sd/- Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Panchayat,Kolar
DIPR/KOLAR/RO:430/KSMCA/2025-26

ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಪಂಚಾಯತ್, ಮೈಸೂರು
ಸಹಾಯಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರ ಕಛೇರಿ
ಯುವ ಸಬಲೀಕರಣ ಮತ್ತು ಕ್ರೀಡಾ ಇಲಾಖೆ
ಚಾಮುಂಡಿ ವಿಹಾರ ಕ್ರೀಡಾಂಗಣ, ನಜರ್‌ಬಾದ್, ಮೈಸೂರು
Phone: 0821:2564179, **E-mail:** adyssmysore@gmail.com & advesdmysuru@gmail.com
ಸಂ.: DYES/2023-24/SE0254 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 02.01.2026
ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ
ಒಂದು ವರ್ಷದ ಅವಧಿಗೆ ಸಹಾಯಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಯುವ ಸಬಲೀಕರಣ ಮತ್ತು ಕ್ರೀಡಾ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ಚಾಮುಂಡಿ ವಿಹಾರ ಕ್ರೀಡಾಂಗಣ, ಮೈಸೂರು ಕ್ರೀಡಾ ವಸತಿ ಶಾಲೆ/ ನಿಲಯದ ಕ್ರೀಡಾಪಟುಗಳಿಗೆ ಊಟೋಪಹಾರ ಪೂರೈಕೆಗಾಗಿ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕ ಕಾಯ್ದೆ 1999 ಮತ್ತು ನಿಯಮಗಳು 2000 ಅನ್ವಯ ಅರ್ಹ ಪೂರೈಕೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.
ಭರ್ತಿ ಮಾಡಿದ ಅರ್ಜಿಗಳನ್ನು ಅಗತ್ಯ ಲಗತ್ತುಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ **16.01.2026 ರ ಸಂಜೆ: 4:00 ಗಂಟೆಯೊಳಗೆ** ಇ-ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವುದು. ದಿನಾಂಕ: **19.01.2026ರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11:00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ** ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲಾದ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಹಾಜರಿದ್ದ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ದಾರರ ಸಮ್ಮುಖದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಹಾಯಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು, ಯುವ ಸಬಲೀಕರಣ ಮತ್ತು ಕ್ರೀಡಾ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ಚಾಮುಂಡಿ ವಿಹಾರ ಕ್ರೀಡಾಂಗಣ, ಮೈಸೂರು ಇಲ್ಲಿ ತೆರೆಯಲಾಗುವುದು. (ಸ್ಥಳ ಮತ್ತು ದಿನಾಂಕ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗೊಳಪಟ್ಟಿರುತ್ತದೆ), ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಫಾರಂಗಳನ್ನು ಮತ್ತು ಇತರ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು **https:/kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ಇ-ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 02.01.2026 ರಿಂದ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.
ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ಸಹಾಯಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು, ಯುವ ಸಬಲೀಕರಣ ಮತ್ತು ಕ್ರೀಡಾ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ಚಾಮುಂಡಿ ವಿಹಾರ ಕ್ರೀಡಾಂಗಣ ಮೈಸೂರು ಇಲ್ಲಿನ ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ 0821-2564179ರ ಮೂಲಕ ಕಛೇರಿಯ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.
ಸಹಿ/- ಸಹಾಯಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು
DIPR/MYS/1470 /SA/2025-26 ಯುವ ಸಬಲೀಕರಣ ಮತ್ತು ಕ್ರೀಡಾ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ಮೈಸೂರು

KARNATAKA PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.
Tumkur Division, Karnataka, Telephone : 0816 2272479.
No.EE/KPWD/Tmk/AE-2/T.No.38/2025-26/ Dt. 29-12-2025
Invitation For Tender (IFT) KW- 3 & 4 e-TENDER NOTIFICATION.
On behalf of Government of Karnataka tenders are invited in Two cover system for Class-3 & above Contractors registered in PWD for **31 work** under 4059 CMIDP Head of account in the jurisidiction of Tumkur Division through KPPP-Portal **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in).** The dates are published as below.
(Maximun amount Put to Tender **Rs.162.71 Lakhs** and Minimum amount put to Tender **Rs.60.29 Lakhs** Maximun EMD Amount **Rs. 2,44,069/-** and Minimum EMD Amount **Rs. 60,295/-**)

1	Last date for tender information enquiries	**: 14-01-2026: 17-30**
2	Last date for submission of tender.	**:16-01-2026 : 16-00**
3	Date of opening the Technical bid.	**: 17-01-2026 : 16-30**
4	Date of opening the Financial bid.	**: 19-01-2026 : 17-00**

Note: Turnover Certificate without UDI Number will not be considered, Here after any changes with reference to this Notification will be Notified in E-Portal Only.
Sd/- Executive Engineer
DIPR/TUM/RO-206/25-26/Oysters P.W.D Division, Tumkur

Govt. of Karnataka
Office of the Executive Engineer, Panchayath Raj Engineering Division, Vijayapur
Tel.No:08352-277816, Fax.No:08352-277817,
E-Mail:zpebjp9@yahoo.co.in
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಕಾಇಂ/ಪಂ.ರಾ.ಇ.ವಿ/ವಿಜ/ಇಪ್ರಾ/ಟೆಂಡರ್/2025–26/3139 ದಿನಾಂಕ:03.01.2026
TENDER NOTIFICATION (Two Cover System)
Executive Engineer, PRE Division, Vijayapura has invited e-tender for the works under Taluka Panchayat Office Grant scheme for the year 2025-26 Work Indent No. RDPR/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT22420 **for General Bidders,** Rs. 100.00 Lakhs Total 1 work vide Tender Publication No.3139 Date: 03.01.2026. Last Date for submission of Tender is 20.01.2026 time 5.30 PM.
For more information about the tender, the information can be collected at the website www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in or visit the office of the said Division during office hours.
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/587/ **Sd/- Executive Engineer,**
ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26 **P.R.E. Division, Vijayapur**

BANGALORE URBAN ZILLA PANCHAYATH
Executive Engineer, Panchayath Raj Engineering Division
1st Floor, Zilla Panchayat Buidling, S. Kariyappa Road
Banashankari (Near Banashankari Temple), Bangalore-560070
No.EE/PRED/BNG(U)/TND/JE-1/33/2025-26 Dated: 03.01.2026
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (through KPPP Portal only) (SINGLE COVER SYSTEM)
Tenders are invited through KPPP Portal by the Executive Engineer, P.R.E.D. Bangalore Urban, For 2515 Grants Works. The work details can obtained from the KPPP Website The Tender Documents can be obtained and submitted on or before **Dated: 12.01.2026 upto 4.00 pm.** Further details can be obtained from website at **https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** or contact this office during office working hours.
Sd/- **Executive Engineer**
Panchayath Raj Engineering Division
DIPR/CP/4860/SA/2025-26 Bangalore Urban Dist.,Bangalore.

KARNATAKA STATE ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION
CIVIL ENGINEERING DIVISION: MYSURU
No: KST/EEM/JE/577/2025-26 Date: 02.01.2026
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION No: 13/2025-26
Tenders are invited for the notification No. 13 work mentioned below as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement at KTPP Ordinance at 1999, and Rules 2000 from the registered Project Management Consultancy firm below through E-Procurement. The Consultant firm will have to upload all required information, documents and rates etc., in the website only. i.e. **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**. No documents will be accepted manually.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Approximate amount put to tender (Rs. in Lakhs)	Earnest Money Deposit (in Rs.)
1.	Appointment of Consultants for the Project Management Consultancy services of the Project Construction of Modern Bus Station at Bannimantap, Mysuru.	**12,000.00**	2,00,000/-

1. Last date for receipt of tenders: **28-01-2026.** 2. Interested Bidders can login to the website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** for details **on or after 09-01-2026.** 3. Any other information required can be had from the Office of the Executive Engineer, KSRTC, Nelson Mandela Road, Bannimantapa, Mysuru during working hours. Telephone No: 0821-2498828.
Sd/- Executive Engineer,
DIPR/CP/4868/MAA/2025-26 **KSRTC, CE Division, Mysuru**

QUICK READ

Nikitha Godishala murder; Accused Arjun Sharma arrested

Chennai

Arjun Sharma, the 26-year-old Indian man who fled home after murdering his former girlfriend, Nikitha Godishala, has been arrested in Tamil Nadu after an international manhunt. According to media reports, Interpol arrested the accused in Tamil Nadu after sustained surveillance and information sharing between various agencies. Nikitha Godishala, a resident of Ellicott City, was reported missing on January 2. She was later found with stab wounds in the apartment of her ex-boyfriend in Columbia, Maryland. Sharma is believed to have killed Godishala shortly after 7 pm on December 31. Later, Sharma made the missing person report to the police and said he last saw Godishala on December 31 in his apartment in the Maryland city.

Victim recalls how husband, son were stripped and beaten

New Delhi

A man and his son were stripped and beaten, and his wife was molested by a group of men in Delhi's Laxmi Nagar on January 2. CCTV footage obtained by the police shows three men dragging Rajesh Garg and his son to the road before kicking them as they are on the ground. His wife was also allegedly molested inside the building. Rajesh and his wife Rita Garg run a gym in the basement of their home, police said. Garg alleged that Satish Yadav, a man whom they hired to take care of the commercial space, cheated them and took over the gym.

Woman kills South Korean live-in partner in Greater Noida

Noida

A South Korean man was stabbed to death by his Manipuri live-in partner in Greater Noida. Police have taken the woman into custody. The victim, identified as Duck Hee Yuh, 47, was a resident of ATS Pious Highway Society in Sector 150 of Noida and worked as a manager for a well-known mobile company's logistics branch for the last 10 years. The Knowledge Park police station was alerted of the incident after the accused, Lunjeana Pamai, 22, from Bishnupur, Manipur, brought in the man for treatment at the hospital after the stabbing. Doctors from the government Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS) informed the police that the man was dead on arrival.

Yogi Adityanath Meets PM Modi Amid Speculation

Speculation over Uttar Pradesh cabinet expansion intensified as CM Yogi Adityanath met PM Narendra Modi today.

NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, fuelling renewed speculation about a long-pending expansion of the state cabinet. The meeting comes amid growing political activity within the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) following recent organisational changes at the national and state levels. Newly appointed acting BJP national president Nithin Navin was also accompanying the chief minister.

According to party sources, discussions during the meeting focused on Uttar Pradesh's development roadmap as well as the organisational structure of the state government. Particular emphasis was reportedly placed on ensuring social and regional balance in the proposed cabinet reshuffle, a factor seen as crucial ahead of future electoral challenges.

Yogi Adityanath's cabinet had earlier comprised 54 ministers, leaving six positions vacant. These vacancies have remained unfilled for several months, adding to speculation about an imminent expansion. Party insiders suggest that after the appointment of Pankaj Chaudhary as state party president, several changes are likely to be introduced within the BJP's organisational framework. As part of this process, some ministers may be elevated in status by being given independent charge of key departments.

Sources also indicate that the state's representation in the cabinet is expected to increase when the expansion takes place, which is being discussed for February. Several leaders have been named as potential inductees, including former state BJP president Bhupendra Singh Chaudhary, MLC Mahendra Singh, Rampur MLA Akash Saxena, and Mant MLA Rajesh Chaudhary. There is also speculation that Akash Saxena could replace Forest and Environment Minister Arun Saxena, while some existing ministers may be dropped from the Yogi cabinet altogether.

The leadership change and cabinet expansion had reportedly been pending for nearly 11 months, leading to sustained political anticipation. Analysts believe the party is now fully prepared to move ahead, with Monday's meeting expected to accelerate final preparations.

Armed Forces Made India Proud During Operation Sindoor: VP

NEW DELHI

Vice President C P Radhakrishnan praised Operation Sindoor, saying India's armed forces showcased national resolve and global strength.

Vice President C P Radhakrishnan on Monday said India's armed forces made the nation proud through the successful execution of Operation Sindoor, demonstrating the country's determination and military capability to the world. Addressing cadets at the National Cadet Corps (NCC) Republic Day Camp held at Delhi Cantonment, he lauded both the armed forces and the NCC for their exemplary contributions during the operation.

In his address, the Vice President said Operation Sindoor stood as a strong message of India's resoluteness in safeguarding national interests. He noted that the precision and professionalism displayed by the armed forces during the military action earned global recognition and reinforced India's stature as a confident and capable nation. According to him, such operations not only protect national security but also strengthen citizens' faith in the country's defence institutions.

Highlighting the role of the NCC, Radhakrishnan said the organisation played a crucial supporting role during Operation Sindoor. The NCC made a commendable contribution during Operation Sindoor when nearly 72,000 NCC cadets turned into 'NCC warriors' by volunteering services for civil defence measures, he said. He added that the scale of participation reflected the spirit of discipline, patriotism, and service that the NCC seeks to instil among young Indians.

The Vice President emphasised that NCC cadets assisted authorities in a range of civil defence activities, including disaster preparedness, public awareness, and logistical support. Their involvement, he said, demonstrated how youth organisations can effectively complement national efforts during critical times. He described the cadets' contribution as an example of nation-first thinking and collective responsibility.

Radhakrishnan also spoke about the broader role of the NCC in shaping future leaders. He said the organisation continues to play a vital role in nurturing character, leadership, and a sense of duty among the youth. By actively participating in national initiatives such as Operation Sindoor, NCC cadets gain real-world experience that goes beyond classroom learning and training drills.

Suvendu Adhikari writes to CEC

KOLKATA

A day after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee raised concerns over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal, Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari on Monday wrote to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, strongly refuting the allegations made by the Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo. Using his social media handle, Adhikari shared a copy of his letter to CEC and slammed Mamata Banerjee for her desperate lies against the SIR exercise.

I have sent a letter to the Hon'ble Chief Election Commissioner, @ECISVEEP Shri Gyanesh Kumar, dismantling Mamata Banerjee's desperate lies against the SIR exercise and her latest plea for halting SIR. Her so-called concerns about the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) are nothing but Pure Fiction, said Adkhikari.

Adhikari alleged that the TMC was rattled by the SIR exercise as it would expose the use of fake and illegal voters in elections.

14 Voters Found Holding Indian EPIC Cards and Bangladeshi Passports

KOLKATA

Amid the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal, the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) has detected serious irregularities involving 14 individuals found to be holding Indian Electors Photo Identity Cards (EPIC) while simultaneously possessing valid Bangladeshi passports. The development has raised concerns over the integrity of the voter database in a state that shares a long and sensitive international border with Bangladesh.

According to officials, the CEO's office received inputs suggesting that these 14 voters might originally be residents of Bangladesh. Acting on these suspicions, the CEO sought verification from the Foreigners' Regional Registration Office (FRRO), Kolkata. In its response, the FRRO confirmed that all 14 individuals were indeed Bangladeshi passport holders.

The FRRO further revealed that these individuals had entered India legally with valid visas but failed to return to Bangladesh even after their visa periods expired. During their extended stay in West Bengal, they allegedly managed to obtain multiple Indian identity documents, including EPIC cards, which are issued exclusively to Indian citizens eligible to vote.

Based on the confirmation received, the CEO's office has already recommended to the Election Commission of India (ECI) that the names of these 14 individuals be deleted from the final electoral rolls. An official from the CEO's office said the deletions will be reflected in the final voters' list scheduled to be published on February 14.

Officials clarified that while the Election Commission's role is limited to ensuring the accuracy of electoral rolls, further legal action against the individuals concerned will be initiated by appropriate law enforcement agencies as per existing legal provisions. This may include proceedings under immigration, citizenship, and foreigner-related laws.

With BMC elections nearing, Mumbai's political battle intensifies as Thackerays unite and BJP sharpens corruption allegations.

Mumbai Civic Polls Heat Up as Thackeray Cousins Unite

MUMBAI

As the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections scheduled for January 15 draw closer, the political contest for control of Mumbai has entered a decisive and sharply polarised phase. In a rare display of unity, the Thackeray cousins Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray released a joint Vachan Nama (manifesto), signalling coordinated opposition to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the country's richest civic body.

For the first time in nearly two decades, Shiv Sena (UBT), the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), and the Sharad Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party faction have presented a unified vision for Mumbai under the slogan Shabd Thackerencha (word of the Thackerays). The alliance has framed the civic election as a fight to Save Democracy, alleging vote theft through unopposed victories and appealing particularly to young voters' sense of idealism and civic pride.

Their manifesto outlines an expansive welfare agenda, including the Swabhiman Nidhi—a monthly allowance of Rs 1,500 for domestic workers and Koli women—the construction of one lakh affordable homes over five years, and the creation of a dedicated BMC Housing Authority. Other promises include 100 units of free electricity for residential users through BEST, subsidised meals at Rs 10 for breakfast and lunch, reduction of the minimum bus fare to Rs 5, employment allowances and interest-free loans for gig workers, and the establishment of five new medical colleges. The Vachan Nama also makes strong identity-based assertions, calling for a Marathi Mayor and insisting that Mumbai's land should primarily be reserved for Mumbaikars.

The BJP, however, has gone on the offensive. In response to the joint manifesto, the party released an Aarop Patra (charge sheet), accusing the Thackeray-led administration of large-scale corruption during its 25-year control of the BMC. The BJP alleged a scam amounting to Rs 3 lakh crore, claiming that despite spending Rs 21,000 crore on road construction over the past decade, Mumbai continues to grapple with chronic pothole problems.

Madras HC to deliver its verdict on Thiruparankundram Hill lamp case

CHENNAI

The Madras High Court is set to deliver its verdict on Tuesday in the contentious Thiruparankundram Hill lamp case after reserving orders on a batch of appeals challenging a single judge's directive permitting the lighting of a ceremonial lamp atop the hill.

The matter was heard by a Division Bench comprising Justices G. Jayachandran and K.K. Ramakrishnan, which considered detailed oral submissions from all parties. The appeals were filed by several stakeholders, including the Charitable Trust Department and the Dargah administration, against an earlier order passed by Justice G.R. Swaminathan.

The core issue before the court relates to whether a lamp can be lit on the summit of the Thiruparankundram Hill and whether such an act amounts merely to a religious practice or extends to the assertion of property rights over the land.

Appearing for the Tamil Nadu government, Chief Advocate P.S. Raman argued that the petitioner, Ram Ravikumar, had not produced any credible documentary or historical evidence to establish the existence of a lamp post or pillar on the hilltop.

The state, he said, has consistently maintained that no such lamp pillar exists at the site.

Raman referred to historical records to bolster the government's case, pointing out that when a judge inspected the hill in 1920, the judgment made no mention of any lamp pillar. Had such a structure existed, he argued, it would have found a place in the inspection report and the subsequent ruling.

He further submitted that the administration of temples and the conduct of religious rituals are governed by statutory rules and long-established practices. Temple authorities, he said, have the exclusive right to conduct customary ceremonies strictly in accordance with law.

The Chief Advocate also contended that the dispute ought to have been taken to a civil court, as it involves questions of rights, usage, and long-standing practices.

INDIA CAUTIONS NATIONALS

India advises nationals in Iran to remain cautious as protests intensify

NEW DELHI

New Delhi on Monday urged Indian nationals in Iran to exercise heightened caution amid a growing wave of protests sparked by the country's worsening economic conditions. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) issued an advisory asking Indians to avoid non-essential travel to Iran until further notice.

"In view of recent developments, Indian nationals are advised to avoid non-essential travel to the Islamic Republic of Iran," the MEA said. It also called on Indian citizens and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) currently residing in Iran to remain vigilant, stay away from areas witnessing protests or demonstrations, and closely follow updates issued by the Embassy of India in Tehran through its website and official social media channels.

The MEA further advised Indian nationals living in Iran on resident visas to register with the Indian Embassy if they have not already done so, to ensure better communication and assistance if required. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal reiterated the government's concern for the safety and well-being of Indians in the region.

The advisory comes as protests in Iran entered their ninth consecutive day, with demonstrations reported across several provinces, including Tehran. Videos circulating on social media showed large crowds assembling not only in the capital but also in provinces such as Fars, Ilam, North Khorasan, and Semnan.

Human rights groups have reported that protests have taken place in 26 of Iran's 31 provinces since last week. Activists claim that at least 19 protesters and one member of the security forces have been killed during the unrest, although Iranian authorities have not released official casualty figures.

The developments have attracted international attention. US President Donald Trump warned of possible American action if Iranian authorities escalate their response. "If they start killing people like they have in the past, they're going to get hit very hard by the United States," he said.

Meanwhile, Iran's parliamentary Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf acknowledged public anger, calling for legitimate demands to be addressed, while warning that any foreign interference would be dealt with firmly—an approach echoed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

QUICK READ

Military Hospital Jaipur Organises Two-Day Medical Camp

Jaipur

In a significant tribute to the spirit of service and sacrifice of India's veterans, Military Hospital, Jaipur, organised a two-day medical camp for ex-servicemen on Monday. The camp is a part of the lead-up to Army Day celebrations, which were inaugurated by Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari. The initiative marked a historic step towards ensuring comprehensive, free-of-cost medical care for veterans and their families. The camp offers integrated healthcare services, including a Bone and Joint Wellness Clinic with on-the-spot X-ray and BMD testing, specialist consultations by eminent orthopaedic surgeons and personalised physiotherapy with live exercise demonstrations.

UP govt grants 3-year age relaxation for 32,679 police posts

Lucknow

In a significant relief for police recruitment aspirants, the Uttar Pradesh government has approved a one-time relaxation of three years in the maximum age limit for candidates of all categories in the direct recruitment of constables and equivalent posts in the UP Police and Jail Administration. According to an official notification issued on Monday, the decision was taken on the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, keeping in view the interests of thousands of candidates who had become ineligible due to age restrictions.

Oppn blasts AAP govt over deteriorating law and order

Chandigarh

The AAP-led Punjab government has come under sharp attack from opposition parties over the deteriorating law and order situation in the state after a sarpanch from the ruling party was shot dead at a wedding venue in Amritsar. Jarnail Singh, who had arrived to attend a relative's wedding at the Marigold Resort, was shot in the head by unidentified assailants. He was rushed to the hospital but succumbed to his injuries during treatment. Police officials said the matter is under investigation.

Panic in Andhra Pradesh Villages After Gas Leak and Fire at ONGC Well

A massive gas leak at an ONGC well triggered fire, panic and large-scale evacuations in Andhra Pradesh villages.

AMARAVATI

Panic gripped parts of Andhra Pradesh's Ambedkar Konaseema district on Monday after a massive gas leak from a well operated by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) triggered huge flames and explosions, forcing authorities to evacuate residents from nearby villages as a precautionary measure.

The incident occurred at Irusumanda village in Malikipuram Mandal, where repair works were underway at the ONGC well using a workover rig after production had been temporarily halted. According to local officials, crude oil–mixed gas suddenly erupted during the repair process, resulting in a powerful blowout. The gas shot high into the air with tremendous force, creating a dangerous situation within minutes.

Officials said the leaked gas soon caught fire, leading to massive flames at the site. Thick clouds of gas and smoke spread rapidly across Irusumanda and surrounding villages, resembling dense fog and severely reducing visibility. The intensity of the blaze and repeated loud explosions triggered widespread fear among residents.

As a safety measure, authorities began evacuating people living within a five-kilometre radius of the accident site. Massive flames spread quickly, engulfing nearby coconut plantations, with nearly 500 coconut trees reportedly reduced to ashes in the fire. The damage to agricultural property has added to the distress of local villagers, many of whom depend on coconut farming for their livelihood.

To prevent further ignition, officials issued urgent announcements through loudspeakers, instructing residents of at least three nearby villages to avoid using electricity, switching on electrical appliances, or lighting cooking stoves. Power usage was discouraged to minimise the risk of additional explosions caused by sparks.

An emergency response team from ONGC, along with senior company officials, rushed to the site soon after revenue authorities alerted them to the situation. Efforts were immediately launched to cap the gas leak and bring the blaze under control. Fire services personnel, police teams, and officials from multiple departments were deployed in large numbers to manage the emergency and assist with evacuations.

BJP Launches Nationwide 'VB–G RAM G Janjagaran Abhiyan

NEW DELHI

The BJP launched a nationwide rural awareness drive to highlight the VB–G RAM G Act's provisions.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday launched a nationwide public awareness campaign titled 'VB–G RAM G Janjagaran Abhiyan' to promote and explain the provisions of the newly enacted VB–G RAM G Act, 2025. The extensive outreach initiative is aimed primarily at rural India and seeks to familiarise farmers, agricultural labourers, and village communities with what the party describes as a transformative rural employment and development reform.

The campaign will be carried out under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, reflecting the BJP's effort to directly link the new scheme with the government's broader development vision. The directive to roll out the Janjagaran Abhiyan was issued by BJP National General Secretary Arun Singh through an official letter dated January 4, 2026.

According to the party, the primary objective of the campaign is to take the key benefits of the VB–G RAM G scheme directly to rural beneficiaries and ensure clarity about its scope and intent. The BJP has positioned the Act as a landmark reform aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat, projecting it as a robust alternative to the existing rural employment framework under MGNREGA. Party leaders have argued that the new scheme is designed to accelerate rural development while addressing long-standing concerns related to inefficiency and corruption.

The VB–G RAM G scheme focuses on strengthening the rural economy, expanding employment opportunities, and improving infrastructure at the grassroots level. One of its major features is the enhancement of guaranteed employment from 100 days to 125 days, along with a stronger emphasis on sustainable livelihood generation and asset creation in villages. The BJP claims that this approach will not only provide more workdays but also ensure higher-quality outcomes for rural communities.

The Janjagaran Abhiyan has been structured to explain the scheme's benefits in simple and accessible terms, particularly by comparing it with MGNREGA. It also aims to counter what the BJP describes as misinformation being spread by Opposition parties, which portray the scheme as anti-farmer or anti-poor.

World's largest Shivling reaches Bihar's Gopalganj

PATNA

The Gopalganj district administration in Bihar is facing a major challenge in transporting the world's largest and heaviest Shivling due to the poor condition of a bridge over the Gandak (Narayani) River. The 210-tonne Shivling, loaded on a 106-wheel trailer weighing about 160 tonnes, has reached Gopalganj, but officials have halted further movement over safety concerns. District Magistrate Pawan Kumar Sinha said teams from Bihar Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam Limited and the National Highways Authority of India have been called to inspect the bridge after cracks were found at several locations. Bihar Rural Works Minister Ashok Choudhary is also scheduled to inspect the site.

The Shivling, built in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, travelled 3,178 km over 32 days and is destined for the Virat Ramayan Temple in Motihari. Officials said both alternative routes—via Dumariaghat and Bettiah—also have weak bridges and culverts, making transportation risky.

Congress leader Harshwardhan Sapkal accused the BJP-led Mahayuti government of systematically eroding democratic norms in local polls.

MPCC Chief Harshwardhan Sapkal Alleges Democracy Undermined

MUMBAI

Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) president Harshwardhan Sapkal on Monday launched a sharp attack on the BJP-led Mahayuti government, alleging that the basic principles of free and fair elections were being systematically dismantled during the ongoing local body polls across the state.

Addressing a press conference, Sapkal accused Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar of bypassing democratic norms. He alleged that a market for horse-trading had opened even before polling day, reflecting what he described as the ruling alliance's desperation to retain power at any cost.

The BJP-Mahayuti's hunger for power has reached a point where it is swallowing democracy itself, Sapkal said. Referring to the municipal corporation elections, he remarked that the situation resembled a grim enactment of the saying, Baap Bada Na Bhaiya, Sabse Bada Rupaiya (Money is greater than any relationship). He claimed that monetary inducements and pressure tactics were being used to influence candidates and outcomes.

Sapkal stressed that elections are a routine and essential feature of a healthy democracy, but accused the present dispensation of attempting to eliminate the Opposition entirely from the political arena. Drawing a contrast with India's early democratic traditions, he recalled that the Cabinet of the country's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, included six non-Congress ministers, reflecting an inclusive and democratic mindset.

Today, the BJP and Mahayuti have developed a mindset where they want no opposition, Sapkal alleged. He claimed that to secure unopposed victories, ruling party leaders were preventing Opposition candidates from filing nominations, issuing threats, and exerting undue pressure. According to him, these actions were being carried out with the blatant support of the police and administration, while the Election Commission was acting as a mute spectator. The MPCC chief further demanded electoral reforms to protect voters' rights.

After LoP, Kerala anti-graft body seeks CBI probe

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

After Kerala's Leader of the Opposition (LoP) V.D. Satheesan, the State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (VACB) has on Monday recommended a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the alleged financial irregularities linked to the Punarjani housing project, involving an NGO Manappatt Foundation, and its chief executive officer (CEO). The Punarjani project, spearheaded by LoP Satheesan during his tenure as an MLA, aimed to construct houses for those who lost their homes in the devastating 2018 floods.

Allegations surfaced that the NGO's CEO, Ameer Ahmed, in collusion with Satheesan, raised funds from foreign countries between 2018 and 2022 for flood rehabilitation, allegedly in violation of norms.

The VACB recommended a CBI probe against the Kerala LoP following a preliminary inquiry into the alleged misappropriation of foreign funds collected for post-flood reconstruction.

Adding to the Congress' troubles ahead of the state Assembly elections in a few months from now, the Vigilance Director Manoj Abraham has submitted a report to the state government seeking a federal investigation under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), citing the international nature of the fund collection, according to local media reports quoting Home Department sources.

The probe revealed that substantial amounts were raised from expatriates in Middle Eastern countries without requisite clearances under the FCRA, a senior official said.

Major crackdown on drugs, illicit liquor in Coimbatore rural district

COIMBATORE

The Coimbatore rural district police recorded major success in curbing drug peddling and the illegal liquor trade in 2025, with officials attributing the improved enforcement largely to the implementation of the 'Smart Khakis' scheme, which ensured continuous patrolling and strengthened visible policing across rural areas. According to data compiled by the Coimbatore rural police, a total of 670 kg of narcotic substances were seized during the year in 464 drug peddling cases, leading to the arrest of 556 accused people.

Police officials described the figures as a significant achievement and one of the most sustained anti-narcotics drives carried out in the district in recent years.

District Superintendent of Police K Karthikeyan said several preventive and enforcement measures were introduced in 2025 to strengthen law and order in the district.

The past year saw the launch of the 'Smart Khakis' scheme, under which police personnel were deployed on a shift basis to patrol the entire Coimbatore rural district around the clock, he said.

Under the initiative, patrol teams were specifically tasked with visiting isolated villages, vulnerable stretches, and crime-prone hotspots in rural areas. This strategy, the SP noted, played a crucial role in preventing crimes and ensuring faster intervention.

The continuous presence of police personnel acted as a deterrent. Their regular visits to sensitive locations helped us identify suspicious activities early and prevent offences, he added.

Pointing out that seizures of narcotic substances increased by 52 per cent in 2025, Karthikeyan said the results were achieved through strict enforcement, Intelligence-based operations, and special drives carried out by the rural district police.

He emphasised that the increase reflected improved detection and policing rather than a rise in drug-related activity.

The Coimbatore rural police also intensified action against the illegal sale and manufacture of alcohol during the year. As part of the drive, police conducted 12,940 raids and registered 3,921 cases.

KAVITHA LAUNCHES PARTY

Kalvakuntla Kavitha Announces Telangana Jagruthi's Transformation

HYDERABAD

Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Monday delivered an emotional farewell speech in the Telangana Legislative Council, announcing that Telangana Jagruthi, the organisation she heads, will be transformed into a full-fledged political party. The announcement marks a major political development in the state and signals the emergence of a new political force ahead of future elections.

Kavitha, the daughter of former Telangana Chief Minister and Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) president K. Chandrasekhar Rao, alleged that she had faced utter humiliation within the party, which ultimately led to her political isolation. She had resigned from the BRS after being suspended and had also submitted her resignation as a Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) in September last year. During Monday's session, she urged the Council Chairman to formally accept her resignation, describing the address as her final speech in the House.

Recalling her political journey, Kavitha said she had founded Telangana Jagruthi as a cultural organisation during the Telangana statehood movement to preserve regional identity and raise social awareness. She announced that the organisation would now be converted into a political party to directly address the aspirations of people who, she said, were feeling unheard. A new political platform is coming up in the State. It will work for students, unemployed youth and all other sections, she declared.

Visibly emotional, Kavitha appealed to people to bless her new political journey. She said she had snapped ties with her paternal political home after suffering repeated humiliation. I am stepping out for the people, she said, adding that the decision had not been easy but was necessary to uphold her self-respect and political convictions.

She also vowed to return to the Legislature as a stronger force. I am going out of the Legislature as an individual today, but I will return as a political force, she asserted, expressing confidence that Telangana Jagruthi would contest the next elections and emerge as a significant player in state politics. Kavitha alleged that certain individuals around her father had conspired against her, leading to her marginalisation within the BRS and eventual exit.

QUICK READ

One killed, nine injured in IED blast

Islamabad

At least one person was killed, and nine others were injured in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast targeting a cement factory vehicle in the Lakki Marwat district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday, local media reported, citing police. Police stated that the explosion took place on Begukhel Road near the Nawarkhel Mor. The police said that the deceased was identified as Fareedullah, while the injured included Mir Ahmad, Abdul Malik, Umar Khan, Masal Khan and Syed Jan. Following the explosion, Rescue 1122 teams reached the site of the incident and took the injured to City Hospital in Lakki.

ONGC may get unpaid dividend of $500 mn from its Venezuelan oil project

Caracas

ONGC may receive nearly $500 million in unpaid dividends from its Venezuelan oil project as the evolving US-Venezuela situation has revived expectations of long-pending payouts from the South American nation, global brokerage firm Jefferies has said. Market experts are anticipating that a potential US takeover of Venezuela's oil industry could eventually lead to the lifting of sanctions on Venezuelan crude exports. Although US President Donald Trump has said that sanctions remain in place for now, any future relaxation could bring more oil supply into the global market, putting pressure on crude prices.

Business leaders hold talks on reopening Torkham border

Kabul

Business leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan held discussions on reopening the Torkham border crossing, aiming to ease trade disruptions between two nations, local media reported on Monday. The Taliban-run Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that they and Pakistani counterparts agreed to establish a joint delegation to hold talks on reopening the Torkham border crossing. In a statement, the chamber said Pakistan's Chamber of Industry offered to hold talks during a virtual meeting, a proposal accepted by the Afghan side to ease trade disruptions.

World watches as geopolitical tensions rise in S.America

Trajectory of crisis remains uncertain, several scenarios appear possible, Int'l pressure could lead to negotiated settlements

WASHINGTON

The international community finds itself at a critical juncture as tensions surrounding Venezuela intensify, sparking fierce debate about the true motivations behind foreign intervention and the role of international institutions in protecting smaller nations from superpower influence.

Venezuela sits atop the world's largest proven oil reserves, an estimated 300 billion barrels that have long made the nation a focal point of global energy politics. Simultaneously, the country has become a significant transit point in international drug trafficking networks, with various criminal organizations operating within its borders.

These two realities have created competing narratives about foreign interest in Venezuelan affairs. Supporters of intervention cite the drug trafficking crisis, pointing to the destabilizing effects of narcotics flowing through the region and the humanitarian concerns surrounding cartel violence. Critics, however, argue that oil reserves remain the primary motivation, suggesting that concerns about drug trafficking serve as convenient justification for accessing Venezuela's vast energy resources.

The pattern is familiar, notes Dr. Maria Rodriguez, a Latin American affairs specialist at Georgetown University. Whenever a resource-rich nation faces instability, questions arise about whether humanitarian concerns are genuine or merely pretexts for economic interests.

The timing of heightened tensions coincides with global energy market volatility, lending credence to those who view resource access as a driving factor. Venezuela's oil industry, severely degraded by years of underinvestment and mismanagement, represents both an opportunity and a challenge for foreign interests seeking to secure energy supplies.

The United Nations' Delicate Position

The United Nations finds itself in an increasingly difficult position, balancing its mandate to protect sovereignty with growing humanitarian concerns. The UN Charter explicitly prohibits the use of force against the territorial integrity of any state, yet also calls for collective action against threats to international peace and security.

UN Secretary-General's office has called for dialogue and de-escalation, emphasizing diplomatic solutions over military action. However, the organization's effectiveness remains constrained by the structure of the Security Council, where permanent members hold veto power. This architectural limitation has historically prevented decisive action when major powers are directly or indirectly involved in conflicts.

Several UN agencies have increased their presence in the region, with the World Food Programme and UNHCR expanding operations to address humanitarian needs. Yet critics argue these measures amount to treating symptoms rather than addressing root causes. Smaller nations have voiced frustration at the UN General Assembly, with representatives from Caribbean and Central American states expressing concern that international law appears to apply selectively based on a nation's size and power.

What Lies Ahead?

The trajectory of this crisis remains uncertain, but several scenarios appear possible. International pressure could lead to negotiated settlements that address both security concerns and respect for sovereignty. Regional organizations like the Organization of American States may play increasingly important roles in mediating disputes and monitoring any agreements.

Alternatively, prolonged instability could trigger a humanitarian crisis that draws deeper international involvement, potentially creating a protracted conflict with ripple effects throughout the region. Migration patterns, already strained, could intensify as civilians flee violence and economic hardship. Neighboring countries, particularly Colombia and Brazil, face the prospect of absorbing additional refugees while managing their own domestic challenges.

The economic implications extend globally. Energy markets remain sensitive to supply disruptions, and any escalation affecting Venezuelan oil production could impact prices worldwide. Meanwhile, drug trafficking organizations may exploit chaos to strengthen their operations, potentially increasing narcotics flows to consumer markets in North America and Europe.

A Test for International Order

Ultimately, this crisis represents a test for the international system's ability to protect smaller nations from coercion while addressing legitimate security concerns. The world watches to see whether diplomacy and international law will prevail, or whether raw power politics will determine Venezuela's future. The answer will have implications far beyond South America, potentially setting precedents for how the global community responds to similar situations in the years ahead.

As tensions continue, one certainty remains: the Venezuelan people, caught between geopolitical forces beyond their control, deserve a resolution that prioritizes their safety, dignity, and right to self-determination.

Paris Court Convicts 10 for Cyber-Harassment

PARIS

A Paris court on Monday found 10 individuals guilty of cyber-harassment against Brigitte Macron, after they spread false and malicious claims alleging that she is a transgender woman who was born male. French media reported that the ruling marks a significant legal victory for the French first lady and her husband, Emmanuel Macron, who have increasingly taken legal action to counter years of online abuse and disinformation.

The case centred on long-circulating conspiracy theories claiming that Brigitte Macron was born under the name Jean-Michel Trogneux — in reality the name of her older brother. Prosecutors argued that the defendants deliberately amplified these falsehoods online, targeting her gender identity and sexuality in what the court deemed a coordinated campaign of harassment. The eight men and two women convicted also made degrading comparisons between the Macrons' 24-year age difference and paedophilia, further intensifying the abuse.

Uganda Bans Broadcasts of Unrest Ahead of Prez Polls

KAMPALA

Uganda imposed sweeping media restrictions as election tensions rise, with President Museveni seeking to extend his decades-long rule.

Uganda's government on Monday announced a ban on live broadcasts and streaming of riots, unlawful processions, and other violent incidents ahead of the country's January 15 presidential election, drawing concern from opposition groups and human rights organisations. The directive was issued as Yoweri Museveni, 81, seeks to extend his nearly four-decade grip on power.

In a statement, the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology said live coverage of such events was prohibited because it could escalate tensions and spread panic. Authorities also barred the dissemination of content described as inciting, hateful or violent. In Uganda, critics note that officials frequently label anti-government demonstrations as riots, raising fears that the new restrictions could further limit independent reporting and political expression.

The election will once again pit Museveni against his most prominent challenger, Bobi Wine, a 43-year-old pop-star-turned politician who has emerged as a symbol of youth-led opposition. In the weeks leading up to the vote, security forces have detained hundreds of opposition supporters, according to rights groups and local activists.

Uganda's last election in 2021 was marred by violence, with more than 50 people killed during crackdowns by security forces on Wine's supporters. At the time, the opposition accused Museveni of rigging the polls, allegations the president firmly denied. Museveni, who came to power in 1986 after leading a five-year rebellion, is Africa's third-longest-ruling head of state. Human rights organisations have raised fresh alarms. Amnesty International said on Monday that Ugandan security forces had launched a brutal campaign of repression in the run-up to the election, accusing them of arbitrary arrests, beatings, and torture of opposition supporters.

Trump Threatens Colombia

MARYLAND

Diplomatic relations across the Americas were jolted after Donald Trump publicly threatened Colombia's leadership and suggested potential action against Havana, following Washington's controversial abduction of Venezuela's leader Nicolas Maduro. The remarks, while Trump was speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, triggered swift condemnation from multiple countries and intensified concerns over regional stability.

Trump described Colombia and Venezuela as very sick countries and launched a personal attack on Colombian President Gustavo Petro, accusing him of links to cocaine production and trafficking into the United States. And he's not going to be doing it very long, Trump said, adding to the severity of his comments. When asked whether he was hinting at a possible

US operation against Colombia, Trump responded, Sounds good to me, a remark that further inflamed diplomatic tensions.

The comments came as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay, and Spain jointly condemned the US action against Maduro, calling it a dangerous precedent for peace and regional security. Regional leaders and diplomats warned that such actions risk destabilising Latin America and undermining international norms governing sovereignty and non-intervention.

President Petro responded sharply, urging Trump to stop slandering him and warning that Latin America must unite or risk being treated as a servant and slave. In a series of detailed posts on X, Petro recalled historical grievances, noting that the United States was the first country in the world to bomb a South American capital in all of human history. However, he stressed that retaliation was not the solution.

Zelenskiy Appoints Ex-Canadian Dy PM as Economic Devpt Adviser

KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy announced on Monday the appointment of Canada's former deputy prime minister Chrystia Freeland as his economic development adviser, highlighting her extensive experience in attracting international investment and managing complex economic challenges.

In a statement posted on X, Zelenskiy said Ukraine must urgently strengthen its internal resilience as it continues to confront the prolonged impact of war. He noted that economic stability would be critical both for rapid national recovery if diplomatic efforts deliver results quickly, and for reinforcing the country's defence capabilities should the conflict persist because of delays in support from international partners.

Right now, Ukraine needs to strengthen its internal resilience – both for the sake of Ukraine's recovery if diplomacy delivers results as swiftly as possible, and to reinforce our defence if, because of delays by our partners, it takes longer to bring this war to an end, Zelenskiy wrote. He added that Freeland's background in economic policy, global diplomacy, and investment promotion made her well suited to advise Ukraine at a crucial juncture.

Freeland, who served as Canada's deputy prime minister from 2019 to 2024, is currently a lawmaker in the Canadian parliament and also acts as Ottawa's special envoy to Ukraine.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	6	1	8			2		5
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	1	9	4		8			6
8		6		9			2	

7	3	9	8	1	4	9	2	5
5	4	9	6	3	2	1	7	8
2	1	8	9	5	7	3	6	4
6	5	4	2	8	1	7	9	3
9	2	3	7	4	6	8	5	1
1	8	7	3	9	5	2	4	6
8	7	5	4	2	3	6	1	9
3	6	1	5	7	9	4	8	2
4	9	2	1	6	8	5	3	7

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

SWISS BAR FIRE

Pressure Mounts for Answers after Deadly NY Bar Fire

MONTANA

Pressure intensified on Swiss authorities on Monday as investigators faced mounting demands for clarity and accountability following a devastating New Year bar fire in the Alpine ski resort of Crans-Montana that claimed 40 lives. Officials confirmed that all victims had now been formally identified, with most found to be teenagers, deepening the national sense of shock and mourning.

The tragedy occurred in the early hours of January 1, when a fire tore through the basement of the popular Le Constellation bar. Prosecutors

in the canton of Valais said preliminary findings suggest the blaze was likely triggered when sparkling candles ignited the bar's ceiling, allowing flames to spread rapidly through the enclosed space. Many victims reportedly had little chance to escape as smoke and fire engulfed the venue.

The tight-knit Alpine community united in grief, with residents, tourists, and officials gathering to lay flowers and light candles outside the destroyed bar. Condolences poured in from around the world, including messages from Pope Leo and Chinese President Xi Jinping, reflecting the scale of the tragedy and the international profile of the resort.

Swiss prosecutors have opened a criminal investigation into the two individuals who operated the bar, examining possible offences including homicide by negligence. Authorities said that, at present, the circumstances did not justify placing the couple under arrest, citing a lack of flight risk and the need for further evidence before taking coercive measures. That decision, however, has fuelled growing public frustration.

On Monday morning, the Swiss daily Blick captured the rising anger in a stark front-page headline asking, Why are the couple running the bar free? The headline appeared above a photograph showing mourners and journalists gathered around a massive pile of flowers and tributes outside Le Constellation, symbolising both grief and unresolved questions.

Legal experts note that Swiss investigations involving mass-casualty incidents can take time, as authorities must carefully reconstruct events, assess safety compliance, and determine individual responsibility. Still, families of the victims and members of the public are increasingly calling for transparency and swift justice.

QUICK READ

Sundaram Alternates plans major realty fund raise

Mumbai

Sundaram Alternates on Monday announced plans to raise Rs 2,000 crore real estate fund by March this year. The alternative investment arm of Sundaram Finance said it has already collected Rs 1,000 crore for its SA Real Estate Credit Fund V in the past three months. The company expects to raise another Rs 500 to Rs 1,000 crore before the final close. Managing Director Karthik Athreya said the focus remains on careful investment, protecting capital, and building long-term trust with investors as the fund raising process moves ahead steadily. The strategy aims to support growth in India's property market.

COAI calls for fair D2M testing process

New Delhi

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) urged authorities to follow a transparent and inclusive method while testing Direct-to-Mobile broadcasting. COAI said recent trials did not match the government's planned framework. Director General S.P. Kochhar warned D2M could affect spectrum, networks, devices, and consumer safety. He stressed that all stakeholders must be involved. The group recalled that the Information and Broadcasting Ministry in September 2025 ordered detailed evaluations with clear rules. COAI said limited testing, without telecom operators and device makers, weakens trust. It added issues like certification, safety rules, licensing, usage, and device readiness were ignored.

Waaree arm raises Rs 1,003 crore funding

New Delhi

Waaree Energies on Monday said its unit, Waaree Energy Storage Solutions, has raised Rs 1,003 crore from strategic investors. The investors include family offices, high net worth individuals, and institutional backers. The funding supports the company's Rs 10,000 crore capital spending plan. The plan aims to set up a 20 GWh advanced lithium-ion cell and battery pack manufacturing plant. The upcoming facility will make high performance cells and battery packs. These products will be used for utility scale energy storage, electric mobility, and distributed energy needs across India. The investment also strengthens domestic manufacturing and supports India's clean energy goals.

Centre boosts fertiliser subsidy for Rabi farmers

The scheme boosted domestic fertiliser production 50%, from 112 to 169 lakh tonnes, with Rs 2.04 lakh crore

NEW DELHI

The Centre has planned to spend Rs 37,952 crore on fertiliser subsidies for farmers during the current Rabi season of 2025–26. The amount is around Rs 736 crore higher than the subsidy requirement for the previous Kharif 2025 season, according to an official government statement released on Monday.

The subsidy support will be provided under the nutrient based subsidy scheme, with approved rates effective from October One, 2025, to March Thirty One, 2026. The support will cover phosphatic and potassic fertilisers, including widely used products such as DAP and NPKS grades, ensuring steady supply during the sowing period.

Officials said the scheme has helped domestic fertiliser production grow by nearly fifty per cent over the last decade. Production increased from about 112 lakh metric tonnes in 2014 to nearly 169 lakh metric tonnes in 2025. Between 2022–23 and 2024–25 more than Rs 2.04 lakh crore was allocated to keep fertilisers affordable for farmers.

The government said the nutrient based subsidy scheme has become a key pillar of India's fertiliser policy. It promotes balanced fertiliser use, better soil health, and sustainable farming practices across states. Digital tracking through the Integrated Fertilizer Management System has improved transparency, timely distribution, and coordination with state governments.

Introduced in 2010, the scheme links subsidies to nutrient content such as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and sulphur. This helps farmers choose fertilisers based on crop and soil needs, while also addressing soil degradation and long term nutrient imbalance. Officials believe the continued support will protect farmer incomes, improve yields, reduce import dependence, and strengthen national food security in coming agricultural seasons across the country.

'INDIA WILL BE A MAJOR PLAYER IN ELECTRONICS STACK'

NEW DELHI

Vaishnaw announced four semiconductor plants will start commercial production this year, while electronics manufacturing jobs reached 25 lakh, with some factories employing over 5,000 workers each

Union Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Monday said India is set to become a major player across the entire electronics value chain, covering design, manufacturing, operating systems, applications, materials, and equipment.

He said the growth supports Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Make in India vision and the goal of building a strong producer economy. In a social media post, Vaishnaw highlighted that Apple shipped mobile phones worth about 50 billion dollars from India in 2025, calling it a major milestone.

The minister said electronics production has increased sixfold in the last eleven years, while electronics exports have grown eight times. Electronics products are now among the country's top three export items. He added that forty six component manufacturing projects, along with laptop, server, and hearable makers, are strengthening the manufacturing base.

Vaishnaw said four semiconductor plants will begin commercial production this year. Total jobs in electronics manufacturing have reached twenty five lakh, with some factories employing over five thousand workers at one site.

Industry groups recently welcomed approval of twenty two new projects under the electronics components scheme. These projects are expected to attract over Rs 54,500 crore in investment, generate large scale production, and create nearly thirty four thousand direct jobs.

Officials said the rapid expansion shows rising industry confidence and marks only the beginning of India's electronics growth story ahead. The government believes stronger local supply chains, skilled jobs, and advanced technology will reduce imports, boost exports, support innovation, and help India compete globally in the coming years. This push is expected to benefit startups, workers, and consumers across the country alike.

Asia leads public trust in fair tax systems

NEW DELHI

Public trust in taxation remains strongest across Asia, with India standing out for its high confidence in tax fairness and the overall fiscal system, according to a new global report released on Monday.

The study found that nearly forty five per cent of Indian respondents believe tax money is spent for the public good. Around forty one per cent see paying taxes as a contribution to society rather than a financial burden, showing a strong sense of shared civic duty.

Ethical standards among Indian taxpayers were also high. About sixty eight per cent said they would never justify cheating on taxes, even if they had the chance. This reflects growing respect for rules and fairness in the tax system. The report highlighted India's strong link between taxation and sustainability. Nearly eighty per cent of respondents said they were willing to pay extra tax to support sustainable development goals, showing public support for long term social and environmental progress.

SAIL records highest ever steel sales in Dec

NEW DELHI

Steel Authority of India Limited, known as SAIL, recorded its highest ever December sales at two point one million tonnes, marking a strong thirty seven per cent rise over the one point five million tonnes sold in December last year.

The company said this was its best performance for the month, with record sales across product categories and channels. Strong focus on customer deliveries and faster movement of stock helped reduce inventory levels. SAIL has also stepped up branding efforts in recent months to strengthen market reach.

The strong December showing helped SAIL maintain solid momentum during the current financial year. Total sales volume between April and December 2025 reached fourteen point seven million tonnes, around seventeen per cent higher than the same period a year earlier.

Exports also rose sharply during the month, highlighting SAIL's expanding global presence alongside steady domestic demand. The company said its improved performance reflects stronger market positioning, customer focused initiatives, and better operational efficiency.

Ueda said Japan's economy moderately recovered last year, with stable wage and price growth supporting sustainable economic expansion

Japan central bank signals further interest rate hikes

TOKYO

Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda on Monday said the central bank will continue to raise interest rates if economic growth and inflation move in line with official forecasts, signalling a steady shift away from years of ultra-loose monetary policy. Speaking to a banking industry gathering, Ueda said Japan's economy showed moderate recovery last year despite pressure on company profits from higher United States tariffs. He added that wages and prices are likely to rise together at a stable pace, supporting sustainable economic growth.

The central bank recently raised its policy interest rate to zero point seven five per cent from zero point five per cent, marking the highest level in nearly thirty years. The move reflects the Bank of Japan's effort to gradually normalise policy after decades of near zero rates and heavy stimulus.

Despite the increase, real borrowing costs remain negative as inflation has stayed above the bank's two per cent target for almost four years. Rising prices, partly driven by a weaker yen, have increased import costs and added to inflationary pressure across the economy.

Markets are now closely watching the Bank of Japan's policy meeting scheduled for January twenty two and twenty three. Investors expect the central bank's outlook report to provide clues on how officials assess the impact of the yen's recent fall on inflation.

The yen weakened further on Monday, while government bond yields climbed, reflecting expectations of more rate hikes ahead. The ten year government bond yield briefly touched its highest level in over twenty five years. Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama said Japan is at a crucial stage of moving away from deflation toward a growth focused economy. Analysts said steady policy moves will be key to balancing inflation control with economic stability in the months ahead.

Indian IT revenue growth seen improving ahead

NEW DELHI

The Indian information technology sector is expected to see a recovery in revenue growth to four to five per cent in the financial year 2026–27, according to a new research report released on Monday. The improvement is likely to support high single digit growth in earnings per share, offering some relief after a long period of slow expansion.

The report by HSBC Global Investment Research said IT stocks, which have already risen about fifteen per cent from recent lows, may now move largely in line with the broader market during 2026. The firm noted that the sector is no longer a long term double digit growth story and will behave in a more cyclical manner than before.

Researchers said IT stocks may need active management, as performance will depend on business cycles and changing demand. A possible cyclical rebound during calendar year 2026 or financial year 2026–27 could still offer limited upside from current levels.

The report added that the third quarter of the ongoing financial year was affected by weak seasonal demand and is unlikely to deliver positive surprises. Company level signals were mixed, reflecting caution among clients.

HSBC India's head of research Yogesh Aggarwal said earlier expectations of IT outperforming the market have softened. He said part of the expected recovery has already been priced in, as IT stocks rose fifteen to twenty per cent between October and December 2025, compared to a six per cent rise in the Nifty.

Customer commentary pointed to improving confidence and higher willingness to spend on technology. Analysts also said concerns around artificial intelligence are easing steadily nationwide.

BOK warns uneven recovery amid economic gaps

SEOUL

Bank of Korea Governor (BOK) Rhee Chang-yong warned on Monday that South Korea's economic recovery this year may be uneven, with clear gaps between industries and a growing difference between official growth numbers and how citizens feel.

Speaking at a meeting with leaders of financial firms and industry officials in Seoul, Rhee said economic polarization and uncertainty are likely to continue. The meeting was also attended by senior regulators, including the heads of the Financial Services Commission and the Financial Supervisory Service.

Rhee explained that while overall growth is expected to improve compared to last year, the recovery may take a "K-shaped" form. This means some sectors may perform well, while others struggle, leaving many households feeling left behind.

He pointed to unstable global trade conditions, changing fiscal policies in major economies, and shifting expectations around the global artificial intelligence industry as key risks this year.

Rhee said the central bank will take a careful and flexible approach to monetary policy. He stressed the need to closely watch growth, inflation, and financial stability as uncertainty increases.

Apple's iPhone exports from India hit $50 billion

NEW DELHI

Apple's iPhone exports from India crossed $50 billion by December 2025 under the government's production linked incentive (PLI) scheme. The milestone was driven by shipments from five assembly plants, three run by Tata Group and two by Foxconn, supported by 45 local suppliers. In FY26's first nine months, iPhone exports reached nearly $16 billion. Smartphones now form India's largest export category, up from 167th in 2015. Apple sold 6.5 million iPhone 16 units in 2025, topping sales charts. Samsung's five year PLI exports stood at $17 billion. The scheme ends March 2026, with extensions under discussion to support growth further.

Trump's Venezuela move raises fresh investor risks

SINGAPORE

Global markets stayed mostly calm after the United States captured Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, but some investors warned that geopolitical risks may be underestimated as tensions rise in the Americas.

Asian stock markets rose on Monday, while oil prices slipped slightly. Gold prices edged higher as investors sought some safety. Analysts said the muted reaction was partly because Venezuela's oil production is small compared to global supply and would need years of investment to rise sharply.

However, investors said the move signals a tougher and more direct US foreign policy under President Donald Trump. It marked the first major US intervention in Latin America since Panama in 1989 and revived concerns about wider regional instability.

Market experts warned that the long-term impact could be larger than what prices currently reflect. They said risks could spread beyond Venezuela if tensions increase with other countries in the region.

Trump said US oil companies would invest to revive Venezuela's oil infrastructure, potentially unlocking the country's vast reserves over time. While this could support global energy supply in the future, analysts believe near-term benefits remain limited.

Some investors also questioned the wider implications of US actions for China, Taiwan, and Iran. However, analysts noted that markets have grown used to frequent geopolitical shocks and now react mainly when supply chains or economic growth are directly threatened. Global stocks entered 2026 on a strong note after ending last year near record highs. Analysts said defence stocks may benefit as countries increase military spending, while uncertainty around US policy could weaken the dollar further.

Experts cautioned that geopolitical tensions are becoming a constant feature of markets. While investors may appear calm for now, sudden escalation could quickly test confidence and reshape global risk appetite in the months ahead.

DISCOUNTED CRUDE ACCESS

Indian refiners may benefit from Venezuela turmoil

NEW DELHI

Indian oil refiners could gain from recent developments involving the United States and Venezuela, according to a new brokerage report released on Monday. The report said that access to heavier Venezuelan crude oil, which usually trades at a discount to Brent prices, may improve refining margins for Indian companies. Choice Institutional Equities noted that India earlier imported up to four hundred thousand barrels per day of Venezuelan crude. If restrictions ease, Indian refiners may again source these heavier barrels, which suit complex refineries and offer better value.

The report also said Indian upstream firms could receive access to equipment and investment opportunities. This may help raise output from Venezuelan oil fields such as San Cristobal and Carabobo One over time.

Analysts expect Brent crude to average around sixty one point five dollars per barrel in calendar year 2026. Limited new supply is likely this year, though fresh Venezuelan output could put pressure on prices from next year.

Heavier crude from Venezuela may push simpler refineries out of the market globally. At the same time, complex refineries in India and China could benefit, improving profit spreads over the medium term.

However, a sharp rise in Venezuelan output is unlikely soon. Years of low investment have weakened its oil sector. In a best case scenario, production may rise by about one hundred fifty thousand barrels per day in 2026.

Venezuela holds the world's largest oil reserves but current output remains far below past levels, the report added. Indian refiners are watching developments closely as global energy markets adjust rapidly this year.

BEYOND DEMOCRACY:
THE HIDDEN POWER PLAYS IN AMERICA'S VENEZUELA INTERVENTION

When democracy becomes a veil

On January 3, 2026, as dawn broke over Caracas, U.S. military forces executed what officials called a "large-scale strike" on Venezuelan military installations. Within hours, President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, were airlifted aboard a U.S. warship heading toward New York, where they face criminal indictment on narco-terrorism conspiracy charges. The official U.S. narrative was swift and familiar: an authoritarian regime had oppressed its people, enabled drug trafficking, and threatened American security. The military operation, by this account, was an act of justice.

But beneath this framework lies a more complex truth. The escalation that culminated in Maduro's capture was not a sudden decision. It followed a four-month campaign of military strikes on alleged drug-smuggling boats in Caribbean and Pacific waters—strikes that killed at least 115 people, many of them never definitively identified as criminals. It included the seizure of oil tankers laden with Venezuelan crude, tankers that represented not just revenue but survival for a nation strangled by sanctions. And it depended on framing a complex political and economic crisis as primarily a narcotics and terrorism problem, when the evidence suggests oil, power, and containment of rival influences were always at the core.

The Double Language of Intervention

- Official claim: Fighting drug cartels and protecting democracy
- Strategic reality: Controlling oil flows, excluding China and Russia, reasserting U.S. hemispheric dominance
- Evidence: Military escalation began after Maduro said Venezuela was open to drug-trafficking talks; tanker seizures and oil blockades continued after arrest
- Global implication: Sets precedent for framing resource competition as humanitarian rescue

Economic sanctions as an instrument of control

The Architecture of Economic Strangulation

The United States has wielded sanctions against Venezuela since at least 2005, initially framed as punishment for inadequate drug cooperation. But the scope and precision of these measures evolved dramatically, particularly under Trump administrations. What began as targeted personal sanctions on government officials transformed into comprehensive financial blockades affecting Venezuela's most vital sector: oil.

By 2019-2020, Washington prohibited transactions with PDVSA—Venezuela's state oil company—effectively cutting Caracas from the international financial system. Subsequent measures targeted shipping, tankers, insurance, and banks willing to process Venezuelan transactions. Each new sanction operated on the same principle: not just to punish Caracas, but to make the cost of doing business with Venezuela so prohibitive that other nations' companies and governments would abandon the relationship.

The impact was devastating but selective. Venezuelan oil production plummeted from 3 million barrels per day at its peak (1997) to under 950,000 barrels by 2025, with crude reserves literally sitting in storage tanks because sanctioned tankers could not move them. The government's revenue collapsed, cascading into shortages of food, medicine, and fuel. Yet while sanctions crushed Venezuela's people, they did not dislodge the Maduro regime—a fact that suggests punishment, not regime change, was never the sole objective.

Instead, sanctions served a triple purpose:

First, they weakened Venezuela economically and militarily, making any armed resistance to U.S. pressure increasingly untenable. By December 2025, when the U.S. imposed a formal blockade on sanctioned oil tankers, Venezuela's military was in no position to contest American naval supremacy in its own waters.

Second, they redirected Venezuela's oil toward Asia—specifically China and Russia—because those were the only partners willing to defy U.S. pressure and still buy Venezuelan crude. This deepened Caracas' dependence on Beijing and Moscow, exactly the opposite of what Washington claimed to want (independence from authoritarian allies) but precisely aligned with revealing the true strategic goal: not Venezuela's autonomy, but control over who dominates it. If Caracas had to choose between Washington and Beijing, sanctions ensured Beijing was the default option—until the military pressure became too great.

Third, sanctions created the economic chaos that fueled mass migration, destabilizing neighboring countries and providing a humanitarian crisis that justified further U.S. intervention.

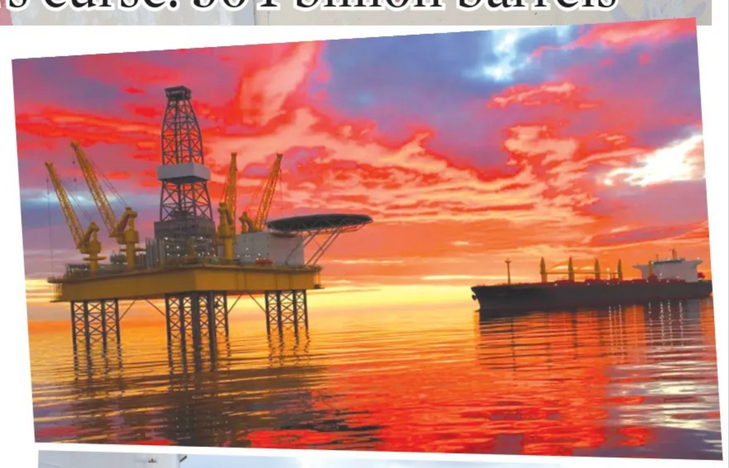
Financial Leverage as Geopolitical Coercion

- Sanction scope: Oil exports, tankers, banks, insurance, digital currency, debt, mining
- Mechanism: Cut off Venezuela from dollar system → force reliance on China/Russia → create pretext for intervention
- Collateral damage: 8+ million Venezuelans displaced since crisis began; regional economies strained
- Precedent risk: Establishes U.S. financial system as unilateral enforcement tool; erodes trust in international banking norms

The Energy Game— Oil Reserves and Global Control

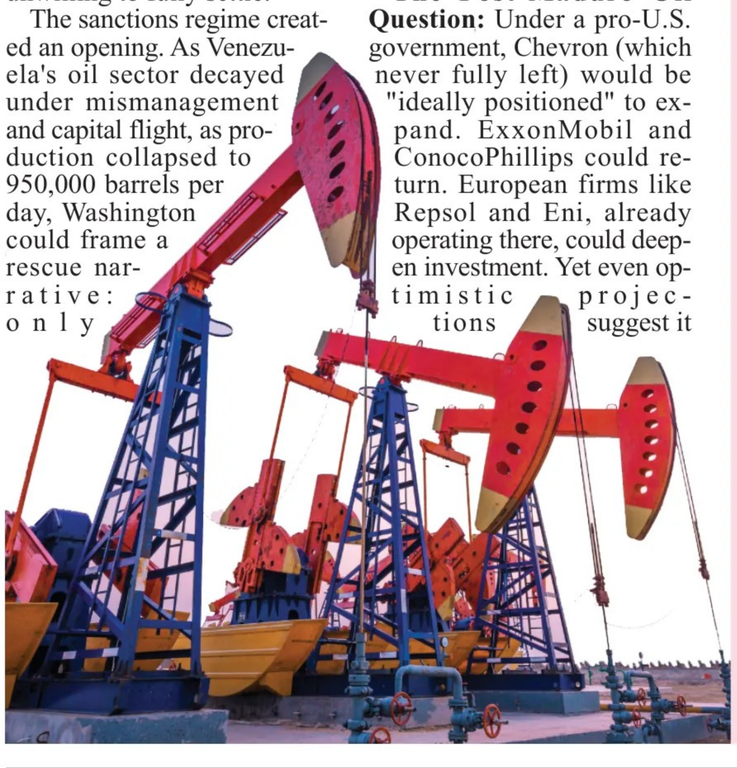
Venezuela's curse: 304 billion barrels

Venezuela possesses the world's largest proven oil reserves—approximately 304 billion barrels of heavy, viscous crude locked beneath the Orinoco Belt. This is not easy oil. Extracting and refining it requires specialized infrastructure, technical expertise, and massive upfront investment. But for refineries adapted to heavy crude—particularly those in the U.S. Gulf Coast—Venezuelan oil is irreplaceable. It is also strategically significant because it is outside the Middle East, outside OPEC+ politics, and, if controlled by a U.S.-aligned government, immune to disruption by rivals.



For four decades, starting in the 1970s when Venezuela nationalized its oil sector and created PDVSA, this resource was Venezuelan—owned and (theoretically) controlled by Caracas. American companies like Chevron, ExxonMobil, and ConocoPhillips operated as partners, taking profits but under Venezuelan sovereignty. Then came Hugo Chávez and the 2004-2007 "renegotiation" of contracts. Chávez forced oil companies to accept less favorable terms, increased state royalties, and asserted Venezuelan control more explicitly. U.S. firms chafed; some, like ExxonMobil and ConocoPhillips, left and subsequently sued for compensation—claims that Venezuela has been unable or unwilling to fully settle.

The sanctions regime created an opening. As Venezuela's oil sector decayed under mismanagement and capital flight, as production collapsed to 950,000 barrels per day, Washington could frame a rescue narrative: only U.S. investment, U.S. technical expertise, and U.S. corporate involvement could restore Venezuela's oil sector. And indeed, President Trump explicitly stated, post-Maduro, that he wants U.S. oil companies to "come in, invest billions" and "begin generating revenue." This language—"come in" to fix a broken nation—echoes colonial-era paternalism, yet it reveals the endgame: control of Venezuela's resources through corporate and financial mechanisms.



The Post-Maduro Oil Question: Under a pro-U.S. government, Chevron (which never fully left) would be "ideally positioned" to expand. ExxonMobil and ConocoPhillips could return. European firms like Repsol and Eni, already operating there, could deepen investment. Yet even optimistic projections suggest it will take 7-10 years and at least $10 billion annually to restore Venezuela's oil sector to meaningful production levels. The market, meanwhile, is currently oversupplied. A flood of Venezuelan oil in coming years could depress prices—bad for producers globally, good for consumers, but geopolitically interesting because it would reinforce U.S. ability to manage energy supplies to allies and against rivals

Resource Control as the Hidden Prize

- Reserve size: 304 billion barrels—world's largest proven reserves
- Current production: Under 950,000 b/d (down from 3 million b/d in 1997)
- U.S. corporate interest: Chevron present; ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, Repsol, Eni poised to return
- Geopolitical payoff: Control oil supply to allies, deny to China/Russia, manage global prices via U.S.-aligned producers
- Global consequence: Energy supply stability for refineries worldwide; potential price volatility if rapid production expansion occurs; model for future resource-driven interventions

The geopolitical chessboard—Containing Rivals

China's Energy Hedge, Russia's Strategic Play

For the past fifteen years, Venezuela has been one of China's most important external investments. Beijing extended tens of billions of dollars in loans to Caracas, accepting repayment in oil—a transaction that gave China a long-term, non-dollar energy supply that bypassed the Suez Canal and Middle Eastern dependency. Even as sanctions squeezed Venezuelan revenues, Chinese tankers still moved crude across the Pacific. Russian firms, meanwhile, provided financial services, technical support, and a geopolitical alliance that kept Maduro's regime from appearing completely isolated.

The U.S. has watched this deepening alignment with growing alarm. In U.S. strategic documents, Venezuela under Maduro represented a beachhead for "extra-hemispheric powers" (code for China and Russia) in America's traditional sphere of influence. From Washington's perspective, the longer Maduro remained in power, the longer China and Russia could cement economic and political ties that would persist even after regime change.

The military operation and Maduro's capture represent a decisive U.S. move to reset this board. A pro-U.S. government in Caracas would almost certainly renegotiate Venezuela's oil-for-loans agreements with China, potentially defaulting on Chinese debts or restructuring them unfavorably to Beijing. It would exclude Russian interests from Venezuela's military and financial sectors. Most critically, it would reestablish U.S. ability to shape Venezuelan policy, making Venezuela once again a stable, predictable asset in American strategic calculations rather than a variable controlled by competitors.

The Great Power Subtext

- China's position: 15+ years of investment; loan repayment guarantees via oil; reduced Middle Eastern dependency
- Russia's position: Financial and military partnership with Maduro; maintains hemispheric counterweight to U.S.
- U.S. objective: Exclude both from post-Maduro Venezuela; reestablish Western Hemisphere as uncontested sphere
- Risk of miscalculation: If U.S. transition fails, China/Russia could support rival Venezuelan factions, prolonging conflict
- Global consequence: Model for how resource competition between powers can trigger military intervention; template for other contested regions

Lessons and Precedent for Future Conflicts

A playbook for great-power competition

The Venezuela Playbook Goes Global

- **Template elements:** Criminal designation → sanctions → military strikes → information control → regime change → resource restructuring
- **Applicability:** Can be adapted to other regions; sets precedent for unilateral action
- **Counter-responses:** Powers building alternative payment systems; nations diversifying alignments; global stability undermined
- **Sovereignty erosion:** Smaller nations increasingly vulnerable; international law weakened
- Precedent cost: Future interventions (even legitimate ones) will be viewed through lens of Venezuela; trust in institutional frameworks declines

The Venezuela operation serves as a template—whether intentionally or not—for how powerful states can pursue geopolitical objectives under the cover of counternarcotics and counterterrorism. This template can be applied elsewhere. A future administration could apply similar measures to other governments it opposes—say, in Central America, the Middle East, or even closer U.S. allies that diverge from Washington's preferences. Once the precedent is accepted, the template becomes available to all. Other powers are watching carefully. China is analyzing how to protect its overseas investments from similar pressure. Russia is considering how to insulate its allies from targeted sanctions and military strikes. Nations in the Global South are rethinking their alignments and dependencies, aware that closeness to Washington or Beijing can each become a vulnerability.

The steps are now clear

1. Designate criminal organizations as terrorist entities, expanding executive authority
2. Impose comprehensive financial sanctions to strangle an adversary's economy and force reliance on rivals
3. Conduct military operations (strikes on alleged criminals, covert CIA actions) framed as law enforcement
4. Manage information through media campaigns and cyber operations
5. Allow humanitarian crisis (migration, shortages) to develop, blame on target regime
6. Mobilize multinational corporations positioned to profit from post-transition reconstruction

Bangladesh bans IPL telecast amid Mustafizur Rahman row with BCCI

Government suspends IPL broadcasts indefinitely, citing public anger over Mustafizur Rahman's removal

Continued from page 1

The Bangladesh government on Monday imposed an indefinite ban on the telecast and promotion of the Indian Premier League (IPL), escalating a controversy triggered by the release of national fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman from the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) squad ahead of the 2026 season.

In an official order issued on January 5, authorities directed all broadcasters, cable operators and advertisers to immediately suspend IPL-related programmes, promotions and event coverage across the country. The directive, approved by the competent authority, will remain in force until further notice and was described as a step taken in the "public interest".

The move follows KKR's decision to drop Mustafizur, a development that sparked widespread criticism and public anger in Bangladesh. The government maintained that no clear or reasonable explanation had been offered for the decision, prompting it to intervene.

"There is no logical reason for this decision of the Indian Cricket Board, and such a decision has distressed, shocked and angered the people of Bangladesh," the order stated. "As a result, the government has been compelled to take appropriate measures."

The order further said that a request had been made to stop the promotion and broadcast of all IPL games and events until further instructions.

Earlier, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had directed KKR to release the Bangladeshi pacer, citing "recent developments" without elaborating. BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said the call was taken after reviewing the prevailing situation.

"Considering recent developments all across, KKR has been advised to release Mustafizur Rahman," Saikia said, adding that the franchise could seek a replacement player if required.

The controversy unfolded amid a broader political debate surrounding KKR's decision to sign the Bangladeshi fast bowler, against the backdrop of reports of violent incidents involving members of the Hindu community in Bangladesh in December. Mustafizur, one of Bangladesh's most recognisable cricketing figures and a seasoned IPL campaigner, was expected to play a key role for KKR in the upcoming season. Neither the BCCI nor the IPL has issued an official response to the Bangladesh government's ban so far.

No decision yet on Bangladesh players' participation in PGTI: Kapil Dev

NEW DELHI

Cricket legend and Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) president Kapil Dev on Monday said no decision has yet been taken on whether Bangladeshi golfers will be allowed to participate in PGTI events, amid heightened tensions between the two countries' sporting bodies.

Responding to questions on the issue, Kapil said the matter would be discussed internally before any call is made. "We'll sit down and talk about the recent issue. We haven't taken any decision on it yet," he said.

The comments come a day after the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) decided not to send its national team to India for the upcoming T20 World Cup, citing security concerns and government advice. The decision followed the release of Bangladeshi pacer Mustafizur Rahman by IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders on the Board of Control for Cricket in India's instruction, a move that triggered diplomatic and sporting backlash.

Several prominent Bangladeshi golfers, including Jamal Hossain, Md Siddikur Rahman and Md Akbar Hossain, currently compete regularly on the PGTI Tour. Kapil, however, declined to comment on BCB's reported move to approach the International Cricket Council (ICC) over the issue.

The former India captain was speaking on the sidelines of the launch of a franchise of '72 The League', a new franchise-based golf league conceptualised by the PGTI to introduce a team format into the traditionally individual sport.

Kapil stressed that India must explore team-based structures in golf to accelerate the game's growth, drawing parallels with cricket's transformation following the advent of the Indian Premier League (IPL). "I played cricket, a team game. Golf is an individual sport, but India needs a team format in golf as well," he said.

Highlighting the impact of team dynamics, Kapil said individual excellence would always remain central to golf, but a collective format brings a different energy. "Individual brilliance will always prevail, but team sport hits different. Our vision is to make golfers experience team sport," he added.

Kapil also said the league's primary objective was to promote golfers and give them a stronger platform, noting that UP Prometheans have been announced as the first franchise of '72 The League, with more teams to follow in the coming weeks.

Damien Martyn leaves coma, speaking to loved ones

BRISBANE

Former Australia batter Damien Martyn has shown significant improvement after being taken out of an induced coma and is now able to speak with family members while recovering from meningitis in a Gold Coast hospital.

Cricket Australia confirmed on Monday that the 54-year-old, a two-time World Cup winner, is expected to be moved out of the intensive care unit after being admitted to hospital last week. The update comes as welcome news for the global cricket fraternity, which had rallied behind Martyn during his critical illness. Australian broadcaster Fox Sports reported during Day 2 of the fifth Ashes Test that Martyn was out of the coma and communicating with his loved ones. The report was later echoed by former teammate and close friend Adam Gilchrist, who described the past 48 hours as extraordinary.

"It's been an unbelievable turn of events in the last 48 hours. He is now able to talk and respond to treatment," Gilchrist said in a statement late Sunday. He added that Martyn was in good spirits and deeply touched by the messages of support he and his family have received.

Novak Djokovic cuts ties with PTPA Players' Association he co-founded

NEW YORK

Novak Djokovic has announced his decision to step away from the Professional Tennis Players Association (PTPA), the players' body he co-founded in 2020, saying his values no longer align with the organisation's current direction. The 24-time Grand Slam champion made the announcement in a social media post, citing concerns over transparency, governance and how his voice and image have been represented within the association. "My values and approach are no longer aligned with the current direction of the organization," Djokovic wrote.

Djokovic launched the PTPA alongside now-retired Canadian player Vasek Pospisil during the 2020 US Open, positioning it as an alternative representative body for professional tennis players, who largely operate as independent contractors. The association aimed to amplify players' voices and address long-standing issues related to earnings, scheduling and welfare.

Over time, one of the PTPA's stated ambitions was to evolve into a structure similar to a players' union, capable of negotiating collective bargaining agreements, as seen in team sports. However, such a framework has yet to materialise in professional tennis.

Last year, the PTPA filed a class-action lawsuit against the ATP, WTA, International Tennis Federation and the International Tennis Integrity Agency, accusing the sport's governing bodies of systemic abuse, anti-competitive practices and neglect of player welfare. The four Grand Slam tournaments were later added as defendants.

Djokovic was notably not listed as a plaintiff when the lawsuit was filed.

Neeraj Chopra parts ways with JSW Sports, launches own athlete management firm

NEW DELHI

Two-time Olympic medallist and India's javelin throw icon Neeraj Chopra has ended his long-standing association with JSW Sports and announced the launch of his own athlete management company, Vel Sports, marking a new chapter in his sporting journey.

Chopra, 27, had been associated with JSW Sports since 2016, a partnership that coincided with his rise from a promising junior athlete to one of India's most celebrated sporting figures. The decision, both parties said, was taken amicably and with mutual respect.

"Over the last decade, our journey together has been one of growth, belief, and achievement. JSW Sports has played a defining role in my career,

and I'll always remain grateful for their support and vision," Chopra said in a statement. "As we conclude this chapter, I carry forward the same values into the next phase of my journey."

JSW Sports echoed the sentiment, underlining the shared philosophy that underpinned their collaboration. "Working with Neeraj has been an incredible experience for all of us at JSW Sports. His success story reflects our shared commitment to excellence and purpose," said Divyanshu Singh, CEO of JSW Sports. "We are immensely proud of what we have achieved together and wish him continued success in all his future pursuits."

During his time with JSW Sports, Chopra scaled unprecedented heights for Indian athletics. He became the first Indian to win an Olympic gold medal in track and field at the Tokyo Games in 2021, a landmark achievement that transformed him into a national sporting icon.

He went on to add a World Athletics Championship gold in 2023 and followed it up with a silver medal at the Paris Olympics in 2024, along with several podium finishes across the global circuit.

JOE ROOT

Equals Ponting with Sydney Ashes Century, Eyes Tendulkar's Record

SYDNEY

Joe Root continued his remarkable run in Test cricket by slamming his 41st century on Day 2 of the fifth and final Ashes Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) on Monday, drawing level with Australia great Ricky Ponting on the all-time list of Test hundreds.

Root, who had waited years for his maiden Ashes century on Australian soil, did not take long to add another, underlining his status as one of the modern game's finest batters. The hundred came despite England already having lost the Ashes series, with Root standing tall in a struggling campaign for Ben Stokes' side.

With this milestone, Root is now the joint third-highest century-maker in Test cricket, alongside Ponting. Only Sachin Tendulkar (51 centuries) and Jacques Kallis (45) are ahead of him. Notably, Root reached his 41st hundred in his 163rd Test, quicker than Ponting, who achieved the feat in 168 matches during a career that yielded 13,378 runs.

The 35-year-old England batter has also quietly climbed the ladder in terms of aggregate runs. Root has already overtaken Ponting and Kumar Sangakkara on the all-time Test run charts, further strengthening his case as a potential challenger to Tendulkar's long-standing records. He is now less than 2,000 runs away from the Indian legend's mark of most runs in Test cricket, a target that appears increasingly attainable if Root maintains his fitness and form over the coming years.

In the Sydney Test, Root anchored England's innings with authority, stitching together a vital 169-run fourth-wicket partnership with Harry Brook. While Brook fell agonisingly short of a century, dismissed for 84 by Scott Boland, Root's composure and control ensured England showed resilience and class in the series finale. Even in defeat, Root's performances have been a shining light for England, reinforcing his legacy as one of the game's greats and keeping the cricketing world watching as he edges closer to history.

Skipper says strong World Cup showings vital for Zimbabwe's revival and global credibility

World Cups key for Zimbabwe to reclaim respect in global cricket: Sikandar Raza

CAPE TOWN

Zimbabwe captain Sikandar Raza believes World Cups offer his side the most important platform to regain lost respect and re-establish themselves on the world cricketing map, beginning with the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup in February.

Zimbabwe have been placed in Group B alongside former champions Australia and Sri Lanka, as well as Ireland and Oman. Raza said the global stage presents a rare opportunity for his team to make a strong statement through performances rather than expectations.

"The World Cup is really crucial in every cricketer's life. For Zimbabwe to gain more respect in world cricket, World Cups play a huge part," Raza said during an interaction facilitated by SA20 after Paarl Royals' win over MI Cape Town.

Raza underlined his readiness for the marquee event with a match-winning spell of 4/13, guiding the Royals to a comfortable seven-wicket victory. He stressed that while results are uncertain, the focus would be on playing disciplined and fearless cricket.

"If we play the right brand of cricket and do what the game asks of us, results will follow," he said. Zimbabwe will play their group matches in Sri Lanka, where spin-friendly conditions are expected. Raza expressed confidence in his team's bowling resources, particularly their ability to sustain long spells of spin if required.

The all-rounder also highlighted the importance of Zimbabwean players featuring in competitive leagues such as SA20 and the recently concluded ILT20. According to him, exposure to high-intensity cricket improves match fitness and sharpens skills ahead of major tournaments.

"The more Zimbabweans playing quality cricket, the better it is for the country and the World Cup," Raza said.

Despite the recent personal tragedy of losing his 13-year-old brother Muhammad Mahdi, Raza chose to honour his commitments in SA20, stating he would not have participated if he was not mentally and emotionally ready.

A sought-after T20 freelancer who has played for 37 teams worldwide, Raza said his aim was to quietly inspire future generations. "Hopefully, my performances can open doors for more Zimbabweans and inspire others back home," he added.

Liverpool denied at Fulham by Reed screamer, Manchester United held at Leeds

Late Fulham equaliser and Leeds stalemate dent top-four pushes for Liverpool, United

LONDON

Liverpool were left frustrated after conceding a dramatic late equaliser in a pulsating 2-2 draw at Fulham, while Manchester United dropped more points in the race for the top four with a 1-1 stalemate at Leeds United in the Premier League. At Craven Cottage, Liverpool extended their unbeaten league run to eight matches but failed to make it count. With their title defence effectively over, securing a Champions League spot remains the priority, and two dropped points did little to strengthen that pursuit.

Fulham struck first through Harry Wilson in the 17th minute before Florian Wirtz continued his recent revival, netting his second goal in three games to level the scores before the hour mark. The visitors looked set to snatch victory when Cody Gakpo scored deep into stoppage time, but Harrison Reed stunned Liverpool with a thunderous 30-metre strike in the 97th minute to earn Fulham a deserved share of the spoils.

"Not satisfied at all. We need points and we wanted three today," Wirtz said, hailing Reed's effort as "unbelievable".

Liverpool remain fourth on 34 points from 20 games, 14 adrift of leaders Arsenal and just three ahead of fifth-placed Manchester United.

United, meanwhile, once again failed to capitalise as they were held at Leeds in a traditionally fiery encounter. Ruben Amorim's side fell behind to a Brenden Aaronson goal before Matheus Cunha's equaliser ensured they salvaged a point. However, it marked another missed opportunity for a team that has drawn too many matches they were expected to win.

Amorim cut a frustrated figure after the match, insisting structural issues at the club needed addressing alongside on-field performances.

Elsewhere, Brentford's Igor Thiago rediscovered his scoring touch with a hat-trick in a 4-2 win at Everton, Tottenham were held 1-1 at home by Sunderland, and Newcastle United climbed into the top half with a 2-0 victory over Crystal Palace.

Premier League: Chelsea's Fernandez grabs late equaliser to force draw with Man City

MANCHESTER

Chelsea's Enzo Fernandez struck deep into injury time to snatch a dramatic 1-1 draw against Manchester City at the Etihad Stadium, dealing a blow to Pep Guardiola's side in the Premier League title race.

City looked set to collect all three points after Tijjani Reijnders fired them ahead late in the first half, capping sustained pressure from the hosts. But Chelsea, arriving in Manchester after a turbulent week that included the departure of manager Enzo Maresca on New Year's Day, showed grit and belief to earn a point at the death.

Fernandez scored in the 94th minute after Malo Gusto's cross deflected off Nathan Ake and fell invitingly at the far post. The Argentine midfielder mis-hit his first effort and saw his second saved by Gianluigi Donnarumma, but he reacted quickest to force the ball over the line with his third attempt, silencing the home crowd.

City, who dominated possession and chances, were left to rue a series of missed opportunities. Erling Haaland was particularly unlucky, hitting the inside of the post with one of his five shots, while Phil Foden and Bernardo Silva also went close. Guardiola cut a frustrated figure on the touchline as City failed to convert their superiority into a decisive second goal.

The draw leaves City second in the standings on 42 points, level with Aston Villa and six behind leaders Arsenal. Chelsea sit fifth on 31 points, keeping themselves in the hunt for a top-four finish despite recent upheaval.

Guardiola admitted wastefulness cost his side. "We missed chances in the second half. When you talk about stats, one is how effective you are in the final third," he said.

There were positives for City, with Ballon d'Or winner Rodri impressing on his first start in three months, though injuries to defenders Josko Gvardiol and Ruben Dias tempered the mood.

Chelsea interim manager Calum McFarlane praised his players' character. "Everyone thought we were coming here to lose, but the lads showed belief and fight. I'm really proud of them," he said, calling the performance "something you dream about."

PSG EDGE PARIS FC IN DERBY AS MARSEILLE STUMBLE AT HOME

PARIS

Defending champions Paris Saint-Germain kept pace at the top of Ligue 1 with a 2-1 victory over Paris FC in a historic Paris derby, as rivals Marseille slipped further behind after a home defeat to Nantes.

PSG's win ensured they remain just one point behind surprise leaders Lens, who continued their strong run earlier in the weekend. It was the first men's top-flight Paris derby since 1990 and was played at the Parc des Princes, located just metres away from Paris FC's home ground, Stade Jean Bouin. After squandering several promising chances with overly elaborate passing, PSG finally broke the deadlock just before halftime. Young forward Désiré Doué latched onto a well-weighted pass and calmly clipped the ball over goalkeeper Kevin Trapp from close range to give the hosts a deserved lead. Paris FC responded after the break when Willem Geubbels converted a penalty in the 51st minute, awarded after PSG defender Illia Zabarnyi was penalised. The visitors' joy was short-lived, however, as PSG restored their advantage just two minutes later. Ousmane Dembélé cut inside from the right and saw his shot deflect past Trapp, a former PSG goalkeeper, to settle the contest.

Elsewhere, Marseille's inconsistent season continued with a damaging 2-0 loss at home to Nantes, leaving them eight points adrift of third-placed Lens. The match unravelled quickly for Marseille, who had two players sent off in a performance that infuriated coach Roberto De Zerbi. Midfielder Arthur Vermeeren was shown a straight red card midway through the first half, before Bilal Nadir was dismissed after receiving a second yellow in the 56th minute.

Mounting tensions and inconsistent results prompt United to act after Leeds draw

Ruben Amorim sacked: Manchester United dismiss head coach after 14 months in charge

MANCHESTER

Manchester United have sacked head coach Ruben Amorim after just 14 months in charge, bringing an abrupt end to the Portuguese manager's tenure amid growing unrest at Old Trafford.

The decision was taken following a meeting on Monday morning between Amorim, chief executive Omar Berrada and director of football Jason Wilcox, during which the 40-year-old was informed he was being relieved of his duties. Amorim's final match in charge was Sunday's 1-1 Premier League draw away at Leeds United, a result that left United sixth in the table and still searching for consistency.

United confirmed the move in an official statement, saying the club's leadership had "reluctantly made the decision that it is the right time to make a change" in order to give the team "the best opportunity of the highest possible Premier League finish".

Amorim's dismissal follows weeks of reported tension behind the scenes, particularly with senior figures in the football hierarchy. Those strains were evident in his final press conference, where he stressed that he had joined Manchester United to be a "manager, not a coach", comments widely interpreted as a sign of internal discord. Appointed with high expectations, Amorim was tasked with reshaping United's identity and restoring them as title contenders. While there were flashes of progress, performances remained uneven, and a string of draws against lower-ranked opposition ultimately eroded confidence in his long-term vision.

Former United midfielder Darren Fletcher has been placed in interim charge and will lead the team for Wednesday night's Premier League fixture against Burnley. The club has not yet confirmed whether Fletcher will remain in the role beyond that match or if an external appointment is being considered.

United now face yet another period of transition as they attempt to steady the ship and salvage their season. With Champions League qualification still within reach, the pressure will be on the players and interim staff to respond quickly to the latest managerial upheaval. Amorim departs Old Trafford after 14 months, his spell marked by promise, friction and ultimately an inability to align results with expectations at one of football's most demanding clubs.

Rejuvenated Indian shuttlers seek strong Malaysia Open start

KUALA LUMPUR

After a testing 2025 marred by injuries and inconsistent results, Indian badminton players will look to turn the page and begin the new season on a positive note at the Malaysia Open Super 1000, starting here on Tuesday.

Led by seasoned campaigners Lakshya Sen and P.V. Sindhu, the Indian contingent will face a stern challenge at the season-opening tournament, which carries a prize purse of USD 1.45 million and features the world's best across categories. The event also serves as a crucial build-up to next week's India Open Super 750 in New Delhi.

Lakshya was India's standout performer last year, rediscovering form with a title at the Australian Open Super 500 after a lean patch following his fourth-place finish at the Paris Olympics. The 24-year-old will aim to carry that momentum when he opens against Singapore's Jia Heng Jason Teh.

Youngster Ayush Shetty, who announced his arrival by winning the US Open Super 300, will be keen to improve consistency as he takes on Paris Olympics bronze medallist Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia in a tough opening-round clash.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist and former world champion, will be eager to put fitness concerns behind her after missing competitions from October due to a foot injury. She begins her campaign against Chinese Taipei's Sung Shuo Yun. Unnati Hooda faces a stiff test against fourth seed Chen Yu Fei of China, while Malvika Bansod returns from a long knee-injury layoff to play former world champion Ratchanok Intanon.

In men's doubles, focus will be on world No. 3 Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, India's most consistent pair in 2025.

HIL 2026: Putting behind 2025, SG Pipers set to chart fresh course

CHENNAI

The 2025 season of the men's Hockey India League proved a sobering experience for SG Pipers. Despite being guided by renowned Australian coach Graham Reid, the franchise finished at the bottom of the table, forcing a period of reflection and reassessment.

Heading into the 2026 edition, Pipers are eager to begin anew. The management has overhauled the leadership group, appointing former India goalkeeper and two-time Olympic bronze medallist P.R. Sreejesh as mentor, while Dutchman Tim Oudenaller takes over as head coach. The new leadership is expected to inject clarity, balance and renewed purpose into the side.

Though Oudenaller has not coached a senior national team, his credentials are impressive. He was part of the Netherlands' under-21 coaching setup at the recent FIH Junior Men's World Cup and enjoyed success with HC Kampong, guiding the club to the 2023–24 Hoofdklasse title and a Euro Hockey League final.

As Jarmanpreet Singh's team prepares for its opening match at the SDAT–Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium on Monday, Oudenaller stressed the importance of cohesion. "Winning matters, but the connection between Indian and overseas players is equally important," he said.

Penalty corners were decisive last season, accounting for nearly 45 per cent of league goals. With renewed focus on set-pieces, defensive solidity, and depth from players like Varun Kumar, Rupinder Pal Singh and Gareth Furlong, Pipers hope to show marked improvement.

FRAN JONES stuns Emma Navarro in career-best ASB Classic win

AUCKLAND

Great Britain's Fran Jones produced the biggest win of her professional career, defeating world No. 15 Emma Navarro in a gripping first-round encounter at the ASB Classic to kick off her 2026 season in style.

The British No. 3 overcame the American second seed 7-5, 2-6, 6-4, marking her first-ever victory over a top-20 player and underlining her growing confidence on the WTA Tour. The result sends Jones into the second round in Auckland, where she will face Austrian qualifier Sinja Kraus.

Jones showed composure and resilience in a match interrupted by rain and momentum swings. She claimed the opening set after play resumed from a weather delay at 5-5, breaking Navarro's serve at a crucial moment to take the set 7-5. The American responded strongly in the second set, using her power and depth to level the contest.

In the decider, Jones struck early, breaking Navarro in the American's second service game to seize control. Despite Navarro winning more total points over the course of the match, Jones held her nerve, protecting her serve with authority and refusing to allow the higher-ranked player back into the contest. She sealed the win after two hours and 18 minutes, drawing an emotional reaction on court.

"I'm absolutely knackered," Jones said in her on-court interview. "For the first match of the year, I didn't make it easy. But I'm really grateful to my team. Preparing for a new season is always complicated, and having the right attitude in the first match is the most important thing." Jones also acknowledged that Navarro was capable of an even higher level, but stressed the importance of starting the year positively. "It's about finding your feet early in the season, and thankfully I did that today," she added.

The victory is a significant milestone for the 24-year-old, who has steadily climbed the rankings despite physical challenges earlier in her career. Beating a top-15 opponent on a hard court provides a major confidence boost as she looks to build momentum ahead of the Australian Open swing. Jones will now aim to back up the landmark win when she meets Kraus, with a place in the quarterfinals at stake.

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